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Tech Editor **Peter Wolff**
Illustrations **Toon53 Productions**
Motoring Editor **John Page**
Senior Photo Editor **Luba V Nel**

ADVERTISING SALES **pieter@dhsmedia.co.za**

for more information

PHONE: +27 10 006 0051
MAIL: PO Box 71450, Bryanston, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2021
ADDRESS: First Floor Block 6 Fourways Office Park, Cnr Roos Street & Fourways Boulevard, 2191
EMAIL: info@dhsmedia.co.za
WEB: www.playboy.co.za
FACEBOOK: facebook.com/playboysouthafrica
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PLAYBILL

ADRIENNE RAQUEL
"My work is all about female empowerment," says Raquel, who blessed this issue with a double dose of her dreamy aesthetic. She shot Lizzo the I ncomparable—"Lizzo is an entire vibe," says the photographer. "She's gorgeous, confident and funny, and she isn't afraid to speak her mind. Capturing her was effortless"—and 2019 Playmate of the Year Jordan Emanuel's 1980s art deco–inspired pictorial. "It oozed glamour," she says of the latter.

LYNSEY ADDARIO
"In many countries where stereotypes about women in Islam are perpetuated, free speech is silenced or nonexistent," says Addario, the Pulitzer Prize–winning photojournalist who has covered international conflict and humanitarian crises for almost two decades. Of fellow photographer Yumna Al-Arashi, the subject of Yumna in Focus, she says, "Through her nudes and self-portraits, and her ability to document her body freely, Al-Arashi is creating a new narrative of Muslim women."

EVAN PRICCO
As custodian of one of America's most impactful arts publications, Pricco was uniquely positioned to curate the art-asactivism edition of Playboy Symposium. With the introduction of a rising crop of artists who are both "participating in and sabotaging the gears of our contemporary art machine," the Juxtapoz editor in chief makes the case that art remains one of the most potent vehicles for free expression in a culture saturated with memes and emojis.

APARNA NANCHERLA
Nancherla has made a name for herself by actually being herself, neuroses and all, so she was a shoo-in for the humor section of our free-speech issue. In Hot Take It or Leave It, the Corporate and BoJack Horseman star weighs the power and pitfalls of forgoing reflection in an age of instant gratification.

CIARA O'ROURKE
For The Green Scare, O'Rourke, an Austin, Texas–based journalist and contributing writer for PolitiFact, examines the Trump administration's quiet suppression of climate science. What scares her most about state-imposed censorship? "How pernicious it can be." The 2015–16 Ted Scripps Fellow in Environmental Journalism adds that "sources discussed self- policing to the point where some scientists were avoiding using the words climate change without an order to do so."

ROB STITES
What do you get when you cross an illustrator with a bibliophile? The witty, whimsical visual that introduces James R. Petersen's Defying the Anti-Porn Police, and some incisive commentary on the evolution of "sexual McCarthyism": "The strategies used to advance political agendas have evolved but are ultimately far easier to identify," says Stites.

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ON THE COVER
Dallas Chandler
Photography by Ryan Dwyer
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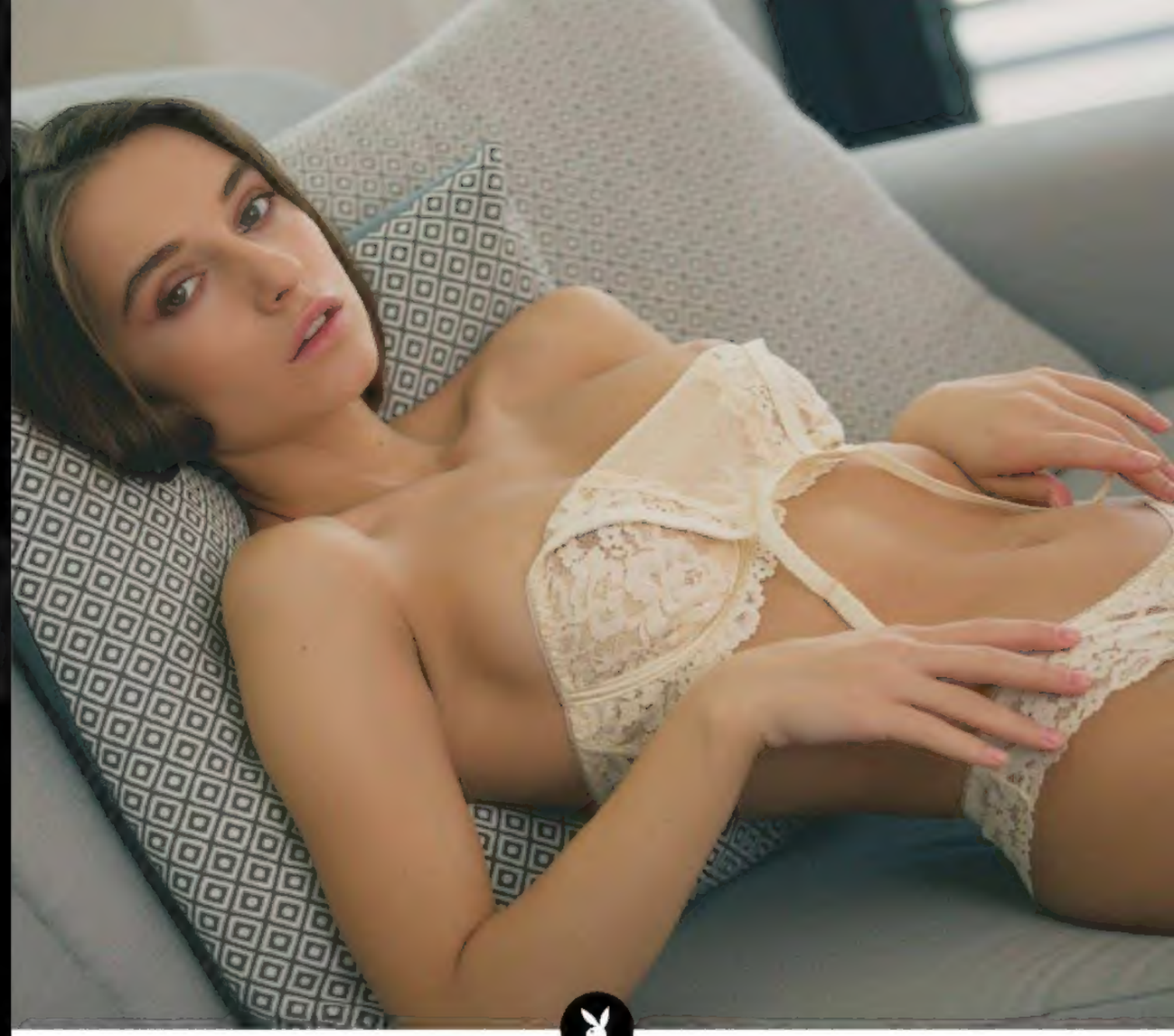

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GOOD VIBES ONLY

A visit to Japan's premier dildo bar, an underground sanctuary where women are free to talk openly — and positively — about sex in an otherwise hushhush culture

BY
SELENA HOY

I am surrounded by a sea of dildos: purple ones and black ones, footlongs and pocket-size. Some of them vibrate; some rotate. Some have botanic-looking extensions, like sea anemones and exotic flowers.

Some are shaped like rabbits, and others look like teddy bears. I'm inspecting a particularly eerie one with a face molded on its silicone tip when the bartender passes me a small pink device. It heats up and vibrates at different intensities via remote control.

Unless previously informed about Vibe Bar Wild One, in Tokyo's Shibuya ward, one would have difficulty imagining its interior: Hundreds of phalluses line plush velvet booths on the third floor of an unremarkable structure, its location announced by a modest sign. The weathered building, accessed via a dingy alley near the Shibuya railway station, is part of the Dogenzaka neighborhood. The bar hovers above a pachinko parlor, a convenience store and some cheap taverns. Upstairs, a sign at the entrance proudly declares ***women and couples only***. There is a buzzer, of course.

Opened in 2013, Vibe Bar is a shrine to female pleasure in a country where people aren't having much sex. A 2015 study by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research showed that in Japan, 42 percent of men and 44 percent of women ages 18 to 34 who had never been married were virgins. Are people choosing alternatives to long-term partners? Indeed, Dogenzaka is home to several hostess bars that employ primarily female staffs to serve drinks and carry on intimate and flirty conversations. Strip joints, massage parlors and "soaplands" (a euphemism for *brothels*), all bathed in pink neon, are within walking distance of one another. But most of these cater to men. Vibe Bar, run by a staff of just five women, is the outlier.

"There are a lot of places for men to play, but there aren't that many places for women to talk openly about sex and be relatively safe," says Yuka Izumi, who handles Vibe Bar's events, public relations and bar management. "We thought it would be good to have such a place."

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **NIKO WU**

Alexandra Hambleton, an assistant professor of Japanese studies specializing in media and gender at Bunkyo Gakuin University in Tokyo, asserts that Japan's current sexual culture is a reaction to the country's complicated history with the sex trade. "Female sexuality has long been viewed as something to be used by men. Women are supposed to be shy and coy and be convinced to have sex, as you see in a lot of porn," she says. "Women are not supposed to be the subject of their own sexuality."

Historically, the practice of selling an apprentice geisha's virginity was not unheard of. Additionally, from 1932 to 1945, the Imperial Japanese Army forced women in occupied territories into sexual servitude, and military brothels remained state-sponsored businesses until 1946. After Japan's surrender in World War II, General Douglas MacArthur, the newly anointed Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, abolished the licensed prostitution system. At the end of the war, however, the Japanese government destroyed many of the relevant documents in hopes of erasing evidence of the women who had died from rape, suicide or sexually transmitted diseases in the preceding years.

What remained was Article 175 of the Penal Code of Japan, a piece of prewar legislation that forbids the distribution of "indecent" materials. As part of an effort to transform an embarrassing and violent sexual history, Article 175's prohibitions can be extended to sex toys. Under Japanese law, anything that comes into contact with the genitals must be classified as a medical device and requires government approval. Adult goods are still sold, but not openly.

Vibe Bar's front door is locked. This extra layer of security isn't a mistake.

It is only now, perhaps in response to sexual deprivation, that women have slowly begun to combat restrictions on their sexual freedom. "I'm past 40, but in my generation it took a lot of courage for a young woman to go to an adult-goods store by herself and buy a sex toy," Izumi says.

By her estimation, clerks in adult shops are "about 90 percent men," and most of the products are geared toward men as well. "Even if women come to purchase things and want to ask about the goods, if the employee is male, it's not likely that he has actually used the goods," Izumi says. "He won't know if it feels good or not, and he can't get to the core of the conversation."

Businesses like Vibe Bar hope to shrink this longtime void. According to Hambleton, the recent boom in women's sex toys in Japan, which has a GDP of almost $5 trillion, is commercedriven. "The only place anyone is able to explore female sexuality, even in a slightly feminist way, is within the marketplace," she says. "It's problematic in that it's commercialized — but it gives people a space that doesn't exist anywhere else."

• • •

Vibe Bar's front door is locked. This extra layer of security isn't a mistake. It's important that women who want to own their sexuality take additional precautions, as many can be "subject to threats," according to Hambleton.

After ringing the buzzer, I'm admitted to the bar. The first thing I notice is that the foyer's doorway resembles a giant labia. The walls are decorated with *shunga* murals, or fantastical erotic woodblock illustrations of sensual pleasures featuring kimono-clad couples mid-coitus. An inviting glow radiates from the endless vibrators, which are accompanied by a variety of flavored lubes. Izumi tells me the decor is inspired by a womb. After returning to the beginning and learning about sex, gender, pleasure and yourself, "you open the door and are reborn with a new erotic knowledge," she says.

"A lot of men here don't prioritize sex. They work late hours and don't have that much energy when they finish work. It's easier to just watch porn and give themselves pleasure than to actually meet up with a woman," says a woman I'll call Kim. She has been dating in Japan for 18 years. "Women seem to be more content with their vibrators than dealing with men, because it seems like men can't be bothered." Her observations are backed up by the results of a 2017 Japan Family Planning Association survey, which concluded that 47 percent of married people hadn't had sex for a month or more. Thirty-five percent of men cited "exhaustion from work"; women's top response, at 22 percent, was sex is "too much trouble."

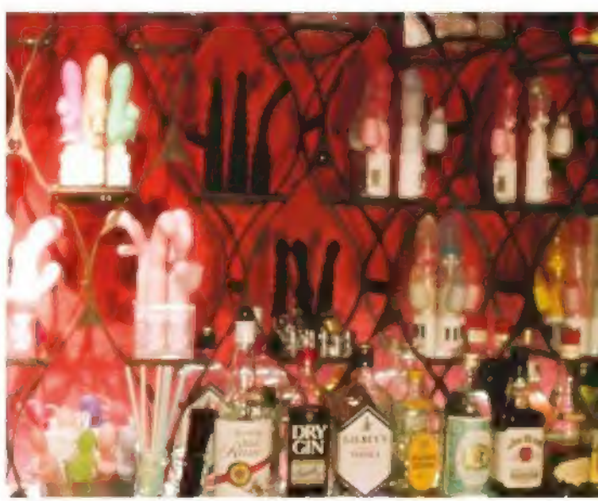
Unlike in the United States, in Japan it is uncommon to speak openly about sex. Sex education, beyond teaching basic biological functions, is not required in public schools. "That's why people like to go to hostess clubs," says Rinda (not her real name), who used to work in such bars. "Because somebody will kind of lead the conversation and you're allowed to talk about sex, whereas in normal life I don't think you can really do that."

While the country outside Vibe's walls continues to struggle with conversations about sex, the bar's staff of self-educated vibe sommeliers is more than happy to answer questions, give recommendations and talk specs. There's even a diagram of the female anatomy printed on the menu, alongside a list of cocktails including cassis oolong and Calpis-hai, a yogurt-based soft drink with a shot of shochu.

As for the most popular items at Vibe Bar, Izumi points to silicone cups with rotating attachments for nipple stimulation, and a vibrator shaped to massage the G-spot. Both products are among the 350 toys on display — toys that customers can touch, examine and even compare notes on with other customers.

Beyond providing customer service, staffers continually present new products. Their varied backgrounds, including an adult-goodscompany employee, an S&M queen and a member of the LGBTQ community, inform their expertise. While the bar itself is not a shop — think of it more like a Tesla showroom — once a customer is ready, she can go to one of seven Wild One shops or order products through an online portal under the same ownership. And because the Wild One company, which has been operating since 1991, has so many brick-and-mortar locations in Tokyo, it receives plenty of customer feedback to help it develop new products. For example: "A lot of people in Japan live with their parents, so we get requests for items that are battery controlled and silent," Izumi says. "If it's too noisy, they're afraid it might vibrate to the next room, or if it's chargeable, they're afraid their parents might find out."

Should more of these establishments pop up, Hambleton predicts, women who were once afraid would finally have a way to explore and experiment. "They'd find they weren't the only people thinking about these things and discover they weren't the only women who were masturbating. For women who may have grown up not being able to talk openly about their sexuality, that is a powerful discovery." ■



HE RIT AGE

IS SEX A MENACE TO SOCIETY? WE FOLLOW THE GOOD FIGHT AND REMEMBERING SHEL SILVERSTEIN, PLAYBOY'S BELOVED "PROTO PUNK" POET AND CARTOONIST

DEFYING THE ANTIPORN POLICE

IS SEX A MENACE TO SOCIETY? RECENT SOCIAL MEDIA PURGES ARE EERILY EVOCATIVE OF A REAGAN-ERA ATTEMPT TO CENSOR PLAYBOY

BY **JAMES R. PETERSEN**

Last November, Apple's App Store removed Tumblr from its digital shelves after concerns arose that objectionable images, including child pornography, were slipping through the blogging platform's content filter. Within a month, all of Tumblr's explicit adult material had disappeared from public view. The concerns were serious and legitimate, but the rush to purge exploitative items from the site also ensnared vast swaths of perfectly healthy sexual content.

The episode eerily echoed past culture wars. An overly broad effort to stamp out sexual expression? We've been there.

• • •

In 1968, at the height of the sexual revolution, President Lyndon B. Johnson established the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography. Its aim was to determine whether porn had negative social effects, and its conclusions, reached in 1970 and based on scientific study, were clear: There was no connection between consuming pornography and participating in antisocial behavior. A decade and a half later, the Reagan administration decided that it wasn't going to let little things like facts get in the way of a conservative crusade.

The 1980s were a cultural battleground, a time when misinformation frequently combined with moral panic to great inflammatory effect. Remember the Parents Music Resource Center, the coalition that took on the music industry in 1985 to protect kids from what it believed were inappropriate lyrics? Having labeled a Twisted Sister song prorape, PMRC co-founder Tipper Gore must have been surprised to hear singer Dee Snider testify in a Senate hearing that he was in fact a faithful Christian and that "Under the Blade" was actually about the fear of surgery. "The only sadomasochism, bondage and rape in this song is in the mind of Ms. Gore," he said.

At the time, fundamentalists and other anti-porn activists were fighting to control the public image of sex — to put the hard-won sexual freedoms of the 1960s and 1970s back in the box. The socalled religious right was on the rise and had a friendly audience in the White House: "We consider pornography to be a public problem," said Reagan in 1984. In May 1985, Reagan's attorney general, Edwin Meese, troubled by the rise of cable television, video recorders and dial-a-porn phone sex, among other developments, called for a re examination. "Pornography now is available at home to almost anyone," he said.

Unlike its predecessor, the Meese Commission on Pornography was more interested in anecdotes than in scientific evidence. Holding public hearings in cities across the country, the 11- member group heard from 208 witnesses, including 30 alleged victims of porn — one of whom bemoaned the "connection between sexual promiscuity, venereal disease, abortion, divorce, homosexuality, sexual abuse of children, suicide, drug abuse, rape and prostitution to pornography."

PLAYBOY publisher and editor in chief Hugh Hefner stood firmly in opposition to the commission, whose efforts he called a "witch hunt." The commission "trundled out a parade of bornagain basket cases, anti-sex feminists and fun-hating fundamentalists," he wrote in a January 1986 editorial. (Hefner was far

ILLUSTRATION BY **ROB STITES**

from the only critic of the commission; other prominent detractors included feminist Betty Friedan, novelist Kurt Vonnegut and actress Colleen Dew hurst.) Many of those who gave testimony at the hearings seemed to advance the domino theory of porn — that a single exposure would lead to a growing appetite for the bizarre, the violent, the perverse. One born-again Christian claimed he went from seeing a deck of pornographic playing cards at the age of 12 to shoplifting copies of PLAYBOY from the local grocery store to engaging in bestiality with the family dog.

Barry Lynn of the American Civil Liberties Union noted a distinctly conservative bias across the hearings. He calculated that of the 208 witnesses, "at least 160 (77 percent) were urging tighter controls over sexually explicit material," including law enforcement officers, elected officials, representatives of anti-porn groups and several prominent anti-porn activists. "Only two persons who might be characterized as avid consumers of the material stepped forward to testify," Lynn reported. "Commission investigators went out of their way to locate anti- pornography witnesses, sometimes even going so far as to help write the statements of victim witnesses."

The commission itself seemed far from impartial. Six of the members had, according to Lynn, a "clear anti-pornography bias." Two others opposed the distribution of sexually explicit content. "Not a single person who was known to be skeptical about the evidence linking pornography to violence or to be concerned about the First Amendment implications of anti-pornography legislation was appointed to the commission," Lynn said. And instead of taking a neutral approach to evaluating adult content, commissioners viewed images taken from the truly disgusting and criminal extremes, called them porn and then used that same word to describe practically all sexual expression. (Our favorite ridiculous vignette? As the panel viewed one picture, a supposed expert described it as a close-up of "a vagina surrounded by a woman.")

This, Hefner declared, was "sexual McCarthyism," a term he popularized. The hysteria of the Reagan administration, Hefner argued, was akin to the infamous Red Scare tactics of Senator Joseph McCarthy of the House Un-American Activities Committee. In 1950 McCarthy had proclaimed that he had the names of supposed Communists serving in the State Department and compiled blacklists of suspected "Reds." A pamphlet called *Red Channels* outed entertainers who worked with people on the blacklist; fellow travelers were made out to be as traitorous as alleged Communists. To Hefner, the parallels with the Meese commission were glaring: It was "trial by headline — unsupported by evidence, unchallenged by cross examination or witnesses for the defense — it is not due process. But it is the method of the Meese commission as it was for McCarthy."

In the 1980s, this tactic evolved: Now representatives of the state were choosing depictions of acts that all Americans could agree were wrong and then widening the definition of "wrong" to include virtually anything the crusaders found offensive.

• • •

Among the witnesses appearing before the Meese commission was Donald Wildmon, head of the National Federation for Decency. The Methodist minister from Tupelo, Mississippi had declared his own war on sex, hiring elderly women to count the jiggle scenes on an episode of *Charlie's Angels*; his monitors were also tasked with tallying the number of times the cast of *Saturday Night Live* used the word penis, and creating lists of advertisers on shows that offended them. The results were presented in a publication called the *NFD Informer*. Wildmon organized boycotts outside stores that sold PLAYBOY and wrote threatening letters to heads of corporations, advising them that they were complicit in the porn industry for helping distribute smut. Coca-Cola, Time Inc., Simon & Schuster and more were targets of Wildmon's ire. (SARA LEE IS LEADING PORN PUSHER,, declared one *NFD Informer* headline about the frozen-dessert company.) In a July 1986 editorial, Hefner called him out: "From his perspective, nudity, sex education, birth control, sex between unmarried consenting adults — even evolution — are indefensible. So he has been harassing companies."

For three years, the Southland Corporation, a major operator of 7-Eleven stores, treated Wildmon as the nuisance he was. Then, perhaps with visions of McCarthy waving a list of supposed Reds, Wildmon gave the Meese commission his enemies list, proclaiming that Southland was among "the leading retailers of porn magazines in America." In February 1986, Alan Sears, executive director of the commission, mailed an ominous letter on Justice Department stationery to the heads of many businesses. The commission had "received testimony alleging that your company is involved in the sale or distribution of pornography," the letter read. "This commission has determined that it would be appropriate to allow your company to respond to the allegations prior to drafting its final report section on identified distributors." What Sears didn't mention is that the testimony came from one of the commission's own members.

With its none too subtle "Are you now, or have you ever been" tone, the letter intimidated executives of Southland, Peoples Drug Stores, Rite Aid and others into pulling PLAYBOY and other magazines off their shelves.

Hefner immediately saw the First Amendment implications. The Sears letter banned "the distribution and sale of PLAYBOY magazine and of other lawful publications without affording those magazines a fair hearing before an impartial tribunal," he wrote. Without due process, the magazine had effectively been declared obscene. Although 4,500 7-Eleven locations stopped selling

PLAYBOY as a result of the letter, the key issue for Hefner was not financial but constitutional. "Justice Robert Jackson once said it was not the government's role to impose orthodoxy on America's citizens — nor to impose a couple of obsessed individuals' views of what is acceptable and what is not. The victimization of 7-Eleven is a tragedy, not as much for PLAYBOY two thirds of our circulation comes from subscriptions—as for all of us."

PLAYBOY took its objections to court, filing a lawsuit against Meese, Sears and other members of the commission. The American Booksellers Association and the Council for Periodical Distributors Association soon joined the suit. In July 1986, the case was decided in PLAYBOY's favor. "A deprivation of a First Amendment right, that is a prior restraint on speech, a right so precious in this nation, constitutes irreparable injury," ruled the federal judge.

The Meese commission apologized for the Sears letter, declaring publicly that PLAYBOY was not obscene, and it refrained from including a blacklist of supposed offenders in the final version of its report (which, we like to remember, Meese presented to the public while standing before a bare-breasted statue of Justice). But it is notable that a draft version of the report contained, along with Wildmon's blacklist, disturbing proposals for the creation of citizen groups that would monitor stores and networks for evidence of obscene material — in other words, morality police.

• • •

Efforts like those of Tumblr and the Meese commission may start with noble objectives — eradicating child porn, preventing sexual slavery and violence — but they can easily slide down a slippery slope into a cultural totalitarianism under which morality is policed and sexual content is indiscriminately suppressed. All Americans must stay vigilant against such censorship. Nothing less than our personal freedoms are at stake. ■

THE GOOD *Fight*

We get it: It can be easy to overlook the words in this magazine. So every now and then we like to remind our readers that since its inception PLAYBOY has championed First Amendment rights—in print and in court. That work continues today as we spark urgent conversations through the Playboy Interview, with recent subjects ranging from dissident artist Ai Weiwei to pro-choice leader Cecile Richards, and our photography, with stunning portraits of the proudly hijabi reporter Noor Tagouri, a Bunny-eared Ezra Miller and so much more. Below, take a tour of some other notable free-speech moments from the company's first half century.

1954

Hugh Hefner successfully fights the U.S. Postal Service's attempts to censor PLAYBOY by refusing to deliver copies of the magazine. "We don't think Postmaster [Arthur] Summerfield has any business editing magazines," Hef says. "We think he should stick to delivering the mail."

1961

PLAYBOY goes to bat for the newly available birth control pill—at the time a wildly taboo subject in America. "To millions for whom children are economically, physically or psychologically inadvisable," ran a piece in the June issue, "the pill promises to become a connubial boon."

1963

For the brazen act of depicting a topless Jayne Mansfield in bed before a besuited man, Hef is arrested on obscenity charges. The case against him melts into a mistrial and inspires Hef to write in the *Playboy Philosophy*: "We must be constantly on the alert to make certain that the label of 'obscene' is not used to censor other areas of free speech and press."

1977

Proving its devotion to constructive satire, the magazine runs pages of a mock Soviet PLAYBOY (slugged "Social Uplift for Comrades"), complete with a tractor pictorial and an ad for a "nyet-skid condom."

1973

Having championed sale, legal abortion for a decade in the magazine—and running dozens of letters from women who had risked everything on back-alley procedures—Hef files an amicus curiae brief in the *Roe v. Wade* case.

1964

Comedian Lenny Bruce faces his own obscenity trial after a particularly barbed set in New York. Hef, who amplified Bruce's reputation as an incendiary truth-teller through the magazine and *Playboy's Penthouse*, helps fund his legal fight.

1979

Playboy CEO Christie Hefner launches the Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award. With recipients over the years ranging from Penn & Teller to Zapiler Tkachout, the award recognizes artists, educators, politicians and journalists who put it all on the line for our freedom of speech.

1980

Hef lands the Anti-Defamation League's First Amendment Freedoms Award. William F. Buckley, writing about the black-tie reception held in Hef's honor, muses, "If the guests arrive wearing only a black tie, that will be more than some of the guests wear at Hef's other parties."

1986

The famously puritanical Meese Commission sends menacing letters to 11,000 retailers, about 10,000 of whom promptly remove the magazine from their shelves. A district court declares the letters a form of censorship and orders them withdrawn.

2000

After Playboy TV expands to 24-hour programming, our lawyers once again find themselves invoking the First Amendment. The Supreme Court sides with the Rabbit, ruling that a section of the 1996 Telecommunications Act—requiring cable providers to limit sex shows to certain times and to scramble the signals for non-subscribers—constitutes a content-based restriction, thus violating the company's free-speech rights.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY **MONICA GARWOOD**

THE SUBVERSIVE SCRIBBLER

REMEMBERING SHEL SILVERSTEIN, PLAYBOY'S BELOVED "PROTO PUNK" POET AND CARTOONIST

BY **SASCHA COHEN**

IT WAS A POEM ABOUT A GIRL WHO WANTED a pony that first landed Shel Silverstein in trouble. Published in his 1981 collection of illustrated children's poetry, *A Light in the Attic*, "Little Abigail and the Beautiful Pony" angered parents for its supposed glorification of suicide: Horse- obsessed Abigail stops eating and sleeping and eventually dies, "All because of a pony / That her parents wouldn't buy." Or maybe it was Silverstein's cheeky closing lines that had truly upset the moms and dads who pushed to ban the poem: "This is a good story / To read to your folks / When they won't buy / You something you want."

For years Silverstein's work hovered near the top of the American Library Association's list of most-challenged books. Community groups in seven states attempted to ban from elemen tary classrooms *A Light in the Attic* and an earlier volume, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, for being "suggestive," "sick" and "disturbing to young minds." Given the antiauthoritarian spirit that animates much of Silverstein's writing, the pushback is perhaps unsurprising. With his carnivalesque illustrations and tales of misbehaving, manipulative kids, Silverstein was a disruptor within the genre of children's literature. Yet his distinctly mischievous streak would be familiar to those aware of his earlier work as an artist catering to more mature readers.

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A longtime doodler, Silverstein walked into Playboy's Chicago office one day in 1956 and dropped off an unsolicited portfolio. Upon seeing his work, Hugh Hefner quickly bought several drawings for the magazine. It was the beginning of a long and fruitful collaboration, as well as a lifelong friendship.

Over the next two decades, Silverstein — whom the magazine labeled, at various points, PLAYBOYS's "peerless prankster," "wandering beard" and "whiskered wit" — was a regular contributor. He landed a dream assignment: traveling around the world to scribble his impressions of destinations including Moscow, Italy, Africa and Paris. Silverstein sketched himself as a tourist in these exotic locations and liked to use clever captions to comment on local customs — and to poke fun at himself. In a cartoon from his Switzerland visit, he sits in the town square and remarks, "I'll give them 15 more minutes, and if nobody yodels, I'm going back to the hotel." His Silverstein in *Hawaii* entry depicts a hula girl draping a chain of flowers around his neck, commenting, "It's spelled l-e-i, sir, and I've heard that joke 3,227 times."

Opposite page: *Silverstein sketches a London scene for the June 1967 issue, his second time covering the city for the magazine.*

His humorous travelogues became the second-most-popular PLAYBOY feature — after the Centerfold, naturally.

Silverstein was PLAYBOY's liaison to new subcultures stirring across the country during a period of potent social transformation. Throughout the 1960s, he documented America's burgeoning counterculture, illustrating the new slang and sexual norms of the beatniks in Greenwich Village and the free-love hippies in San Francisco. He reported on a nudist camp in Pennsylvania "in the interest of journalistic expression and a freer press," he wrote with a wink. His 1965 dispatch from Cherry Grove, a gay resort community on New York's Fire Island, prompted reader praise for its "total absence of moralizing."

"He came along at a time when things were starting to happen in many different directions, and he ran with all of it," says fellow cartoonist Jules Feiffer, who remembers that Silverstein portrayed the world around him with "a great sense of play and mischief."

Silverstein had a particular affinity for the freakish and the monstrous — see, for example, *Silverstein's Zoo*, a collection of unusual animal drawings paired with nonsensical verse, or *Uncle Shelby's Kiddie Corner*, a series of twisted nursery rhymes definitely not intended for children. Literary scholar Joseph Thomas describes Silverstein's distinctive drawing style as "proto-punk, sketchy and improvisatory," different from the more polished comics found in PLAYBOY's pages and lending the brand a dash of gritty bohemianism. Some of Silverstein's early cartoons, Thomas says, "look like pieces that were jotted down on a bar napkin." Yet he was a classic perfectionist, taking great care to arrange his compositions. It takes a real artist to make work that looks so effortless.

• • •

Silverstein, who died 20 years ago this May, brought this devotion and energy to all his creative projects. Although his work has, as Thomas says, the "folksy quality" of outsider art, Silverstein nevertheless achieved enormous mainstream success. In addition to his best-selling books, he won a Grammy for his song "A Boy Named Sue," and he collaborated with luminaries such as David Mamet and Bob Dylan.

Those who knew Silverstein describe him as unconventional, with a devil-may-care attitude and footloose lifestyle. Feiffer remembers his friend fondly as a "free spirit, a legitimate wild man," and "a bad boy who liked to play around." His signature outfit was a pirate shirt, tattered leather jacket and jeans with sandals, and he often carried a guitar. He partied with Hef at the Chicago Playboy Mansion and attracted scores of women — but he didn't want to settle down. "I don't find that one town or one woman, or one job or one career makes me happy. What makes me happy is changing all the time," Silverstein, who never married, once said.

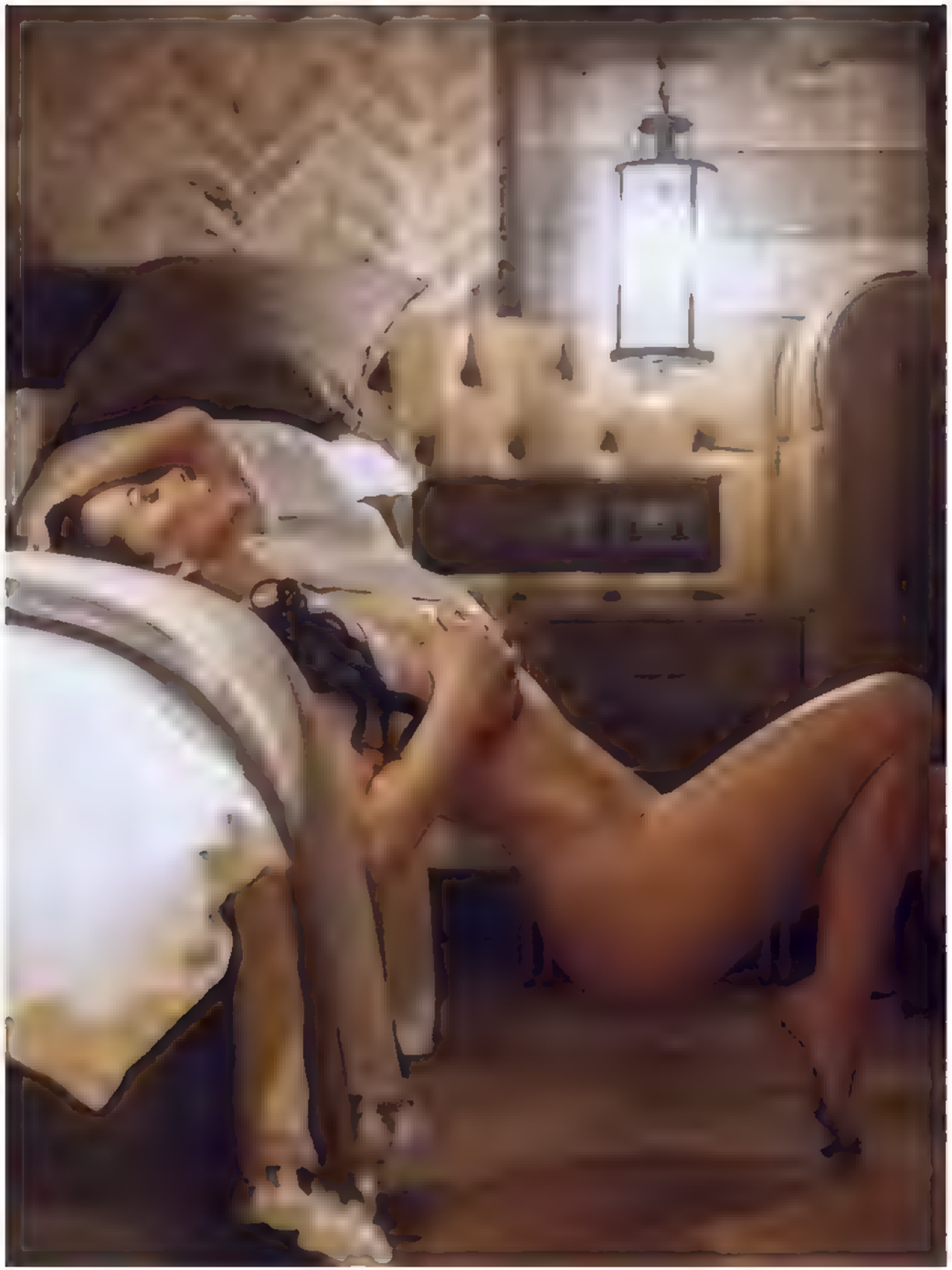
That his work was frequently banned hasn't stopped readers of all ages from connecting with the material: Silverstein's books have been translated into more than 40 languages and sold more than 35 million copies.

Two decades after his death, he remains an American original. "He has no imitators," says Feiffer. "There's no way to try to be what Shel was. He was all himself." ■

EMILY LOCKYER

@EMILYROSEL_X

Photography by **LITTLEFAIRPHOTOGRAPHY @LITTLEFAIRPHOTOGRAPHY_**
MUA **ABBY-LEIGH BEAUTY @MAKEUPBYABBYLEIGH**
Management **LEO ALDERMAN @LEO.ALDERMAN**
Agency **LSA MODELS @LSAMODELS** *PR* **@LSAPUBLICATIONS**



Describe yourself in three words?
Conf dant, Loving, Unique

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Yes, very excited, have always oved Playboy

What was it like starting out as a model?
My best friend introduced me to it on y a year ago, ike anything its hard when you first do it but it gets easier the more you do it.

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far?
Being in P ayboy 100%

Describe your perfect day off when you are not modelling?
Going to a Spa or shopp ng with my g r s.

Do you feel more like a city person or a country person?
Defiantly country however ove to v sit cities.

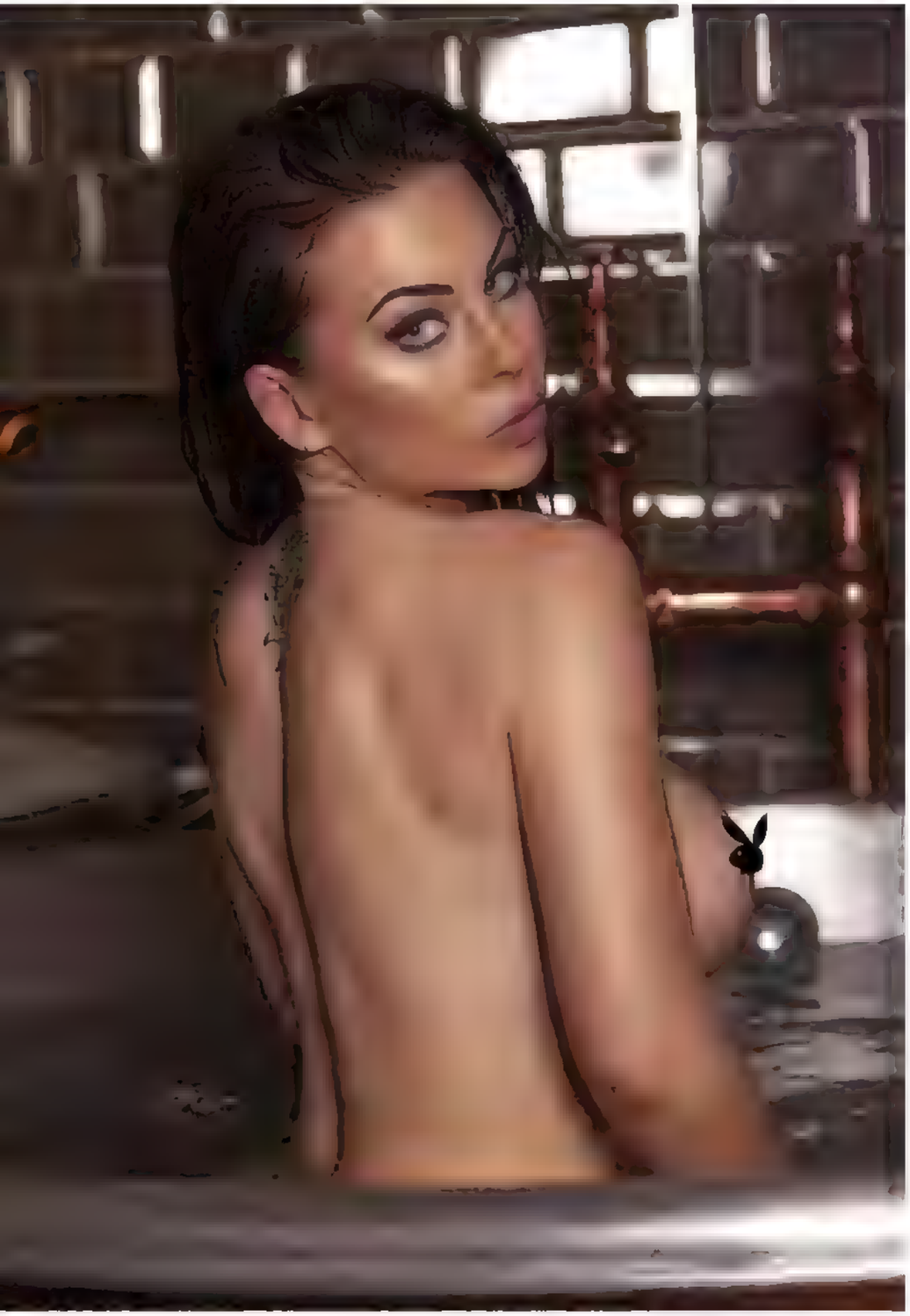
If you could live anywhere in the world where would it be?
ove v ng in Eng and but somewhere with better weather wou d be ove y. Thai and is a Favourite no iday destination.

A guilty pleasure?
McDona d's and Choco ate 100%

Which song is absolutely certain to make you cry whenever you hear it?
Ange s by Robb e Wi iams

What is your favourite word in any language and what does it mean?
Weekend ..., because I love to party and have fun...

Any words you would to share with the readers?
Thank you for taking the time to read, hope you en oyed it, p ease g ve me a fo ow on instagram emilyrose x



The young photographer-artist becomes the first Muslim woman to appear nude in P ayboy — on her own terms and through her own lens. Pu itzer Prize–winning photojournalist **Lynsey Addario** explores the significance of Yumna Al-Arashi's work

For 65 years, the contours of women's bodies have been splashed across the pages of PLAYBOY. As a little girl, I remember stealing away with my older sisters to my uncle's top-floor apartment in our family run hair salon to stare at the glossy images of naked women spread across triple-page folds. We laughed giddily as we wondered when our bodies would develop into such delicious and desirable shapes. Sometimes the woman in the photograph fondled herself, looking directly into the lens; other times she glanced back playfully from behind, her legs spread apart just enough. Her hair, tossed over one shoulder, looked either fresh out of bed or reminiscent of Farrah Fawcett's. The message to me was simple. A sensual woman was always ready for sex.

So some might find it surprising that this series of fully nude self portraits for the magazine is by a Muslim. Yemeni American photographer Yumna Al Arashi. But that seeming contradiction is exactly what drives Al-Arashi as a visual artist. She began her career as a photojournalist but transitioned to art and fashion after growing disillusioned with the confines of documentary photography, including a sense that Western viewers preferred Muslims, particularly Muslim women, to be portrayed as one-dimensional, oppressed and miserable. "She is always holding a dead baby or crying in the desert, or her home has just been bombed," says Al Arashi, describing a typical image to me.

As a photographer working for Western media outlets, Al Arashi worried she was perpetuating the fallacy that Muslim women exist only in a boundless landscape of helplessness, war and devastation. It bothered her. "We are so dynamic," she explains, "and we are all so different — just as any other type of person is. I felt I could use my voice to show another side rather than portray the same negativity."

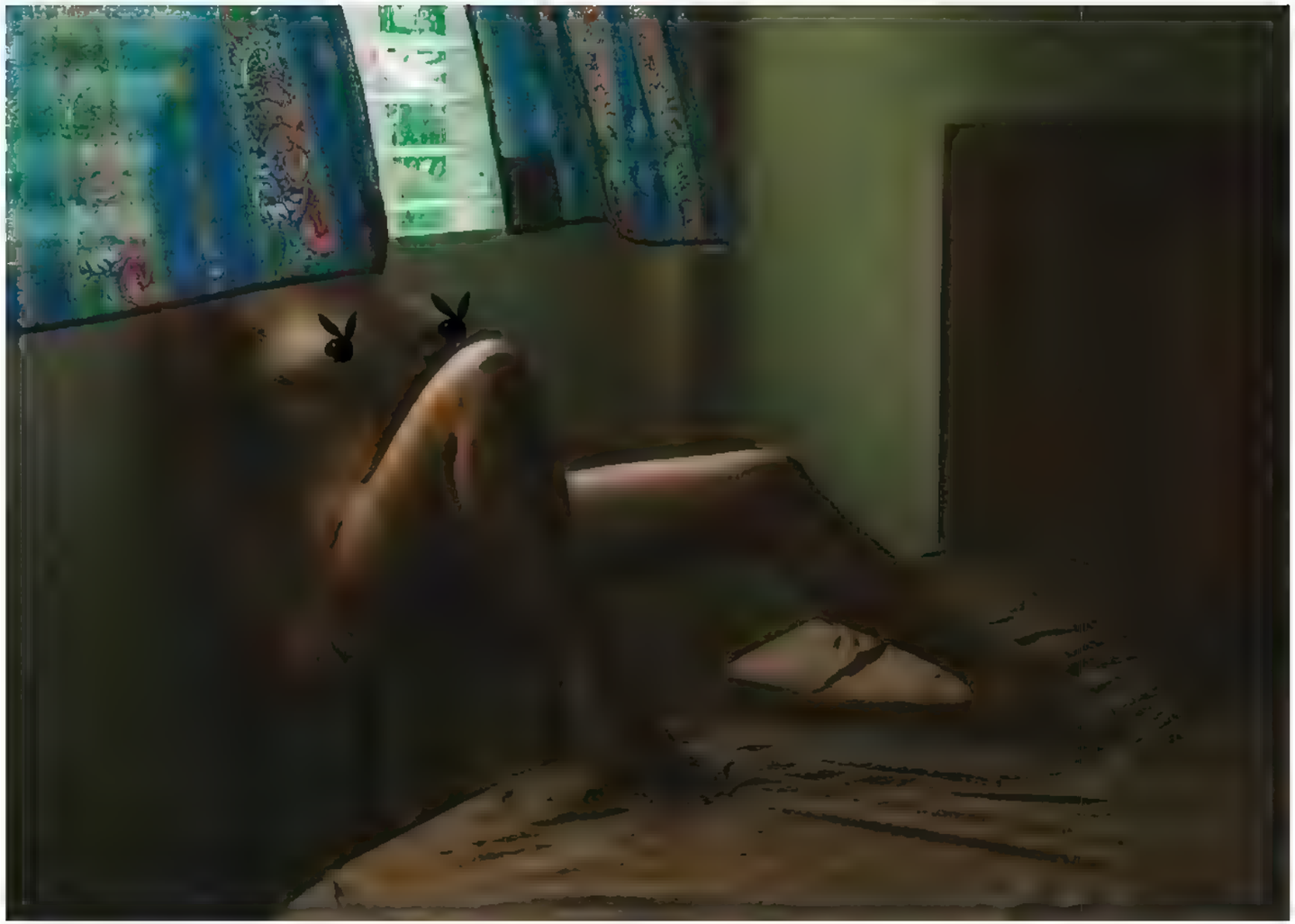
For years, Al Arashi has used the body — hers and her friends' — as a subject in her photography and videography. "It conveys so much emotion that a normal portrait doesn't," she says.

In her 2017 photo series Shedding Skin, Al Arashi captures women inside a hammam, or traditional bathhouse, in Lebanon. It evokes intimacy and sensuality and succeeds at peeling away layers of misconceptions about Muslim women. Although not every woman featured is Muslim, the mere notion of Middle Eastern women agreeing to be photographed naked proved groundbreaking.

When conceptualizing a shoot, Al-Arashi lets her surroundings and mood guide her vision. "For me, a nude self portrait feels like a diary entry," she says. "I can't plan a diary entry. I can't plan the emotions." She works primarily in private spaces — at times difficult in her current home city of London — and shares the results on social media and in articles and exhibitions. Her photographs are evocative, sensual, playful — and a bit withholding. Information in the frame is often hidden by vegetation, a curtain, a billowing scarf or a body of water in which she's strategically immersed.

Al-Arashi claims her self-portraits are "the complete opposite of sexual," so she was understandably surprised when PLAYBOY approached her with this unprecedented assignment. "If they'd asked to feature me as a model in PLAYBOY, 100 percent I would have said no," she says. "As an Arab American, a Muslim and a woman in general, our bodies are often not our own. Having a female editor ask me to portray myself the way I wanted to be seen is really badass and history-making. It's usually a man photographing a woman in an objectifying way. But the idea of me interpreting the way I would like to be seen in PLAYBOY, understanding what that means and who the audience would be. If the audience is male, what do I want to show them as a woman taking photos of herself the way she wants to be seen? How do I want to communicate my nudity and my body? How do I want to talk to the male gaze for the first time?"

Her nude self portraits, shot in the Philippines, succeed perhaps where her photojournalism failed. She is expanding the perception of Middle Eastern women by showing a portrait we rarely see: an Arab American Muslim woman unveiled, confident and in control of her image. On her Instagram feed is a scene from northern Yemen featuring Al Arashi, swathed in a black abaya and black hijab, set against a spare, moon-like landscape. The caption: "A self portrait in Yemen. Don't underestimate women. We made you."



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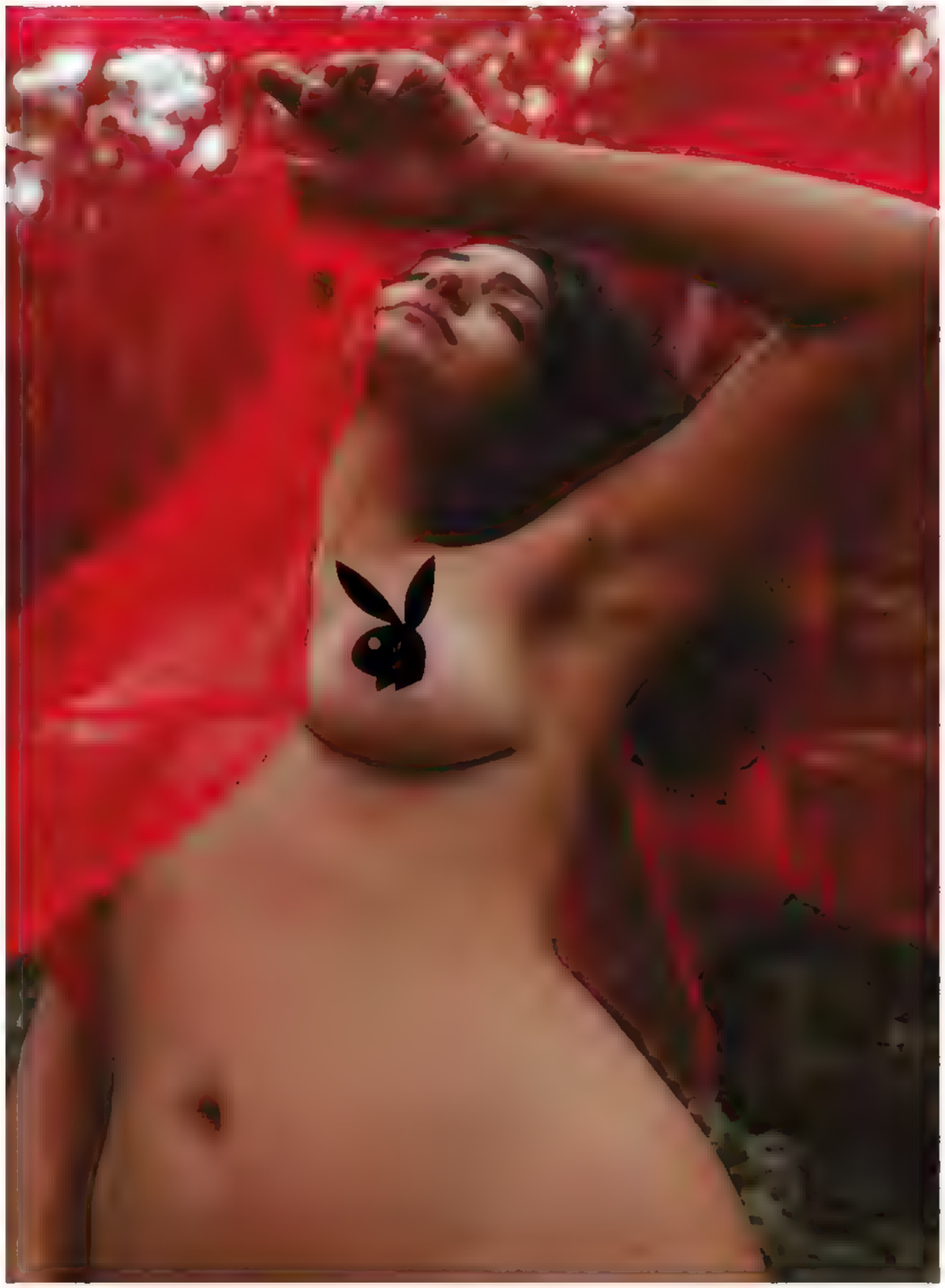

DANNII Summers

Photography by **JESTON BRANDON (@PERFECTLYFLAWLESSPHOTO)**
HMUA **@ANDREWCARTERBEAUTY**
Model **@MISSDANNIISUMMERSX**

Tell us a little about yourself
'm a beautician and hair extensions specialist and ive in a litt e village ca ed Conwy in north Wa es.

What do you enjoy most about what you do?
Meeting new peop e and mak ng peop e feel good about themselves.

What is your greatest life achievement thus far?
My greatest achievement so far s not on y be coming a p ayboy model but becoming a mother 6 years ago.

What would you say is your best feature?
wou d say my best feature has to be my eyes, they a so change co our depending on my mood wh ch f nd very un que.

What makes you feel sexy?
Being comfortab e in my own sk n nothing more sexier than a woman who is conf dent in her own body

What advice would you give to women aspiring to get into modelling?
My advise wou d be to do your research and fig- ure out what sty e image you want to go into first then bu d up your portfo o. Be conf dent know what you want and of course just be fabu ous.

Favourite Shoot Location?
The p ctures says it a .. of course MIAM

Do you prefer kissing or cuddling?
'm a very affectionate and oving person so both ove to do, S ow passionate kisses are a ways the best but you can't beat a good cudd e

What are you really good at?
'm rea y good at cooking' ove to cook food I find it very therapeut c

What is one thing people may be surprised to find out about you?
once save a mans ife from a heart attack on my way to the M ss Wa es f na s, was the on y person who he ped & it was ,ust before Christmas was then awarded with a welsh dragon award only a few peop e have and was given it by my oca mayor

Do you have a catchphrase?
Don't worry be happy

DAVID HARBOUR

EL TEDDER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TAYLOR MILLER**

THE *STRANGER THINGS* BREAKOUT GOES DEEP ON MENTAL ILLNESS, ADDICTION, DEATH THREATS AND OTHER STOPS ON THE ROAD TO HELLBOY—HIS FIRST (AND CERTAINLY NOT LAST) STINT A S A MAINSTREAM LEADING MAN

Q1: *You have been on five episodes of Law & Order Did you ever get to a point where you thought, Really? Another one?*
HARBOUR: Wait, let me count: I 've been on two normal *Law & Orders*, two *Criminal Intents* and one SVU I call it the Dick Wolf Subsidy for the Theater Arts in New York City, because it's the job everyone gets when they're doing an off Broadway play and making $270 a week There's no way you can pay rent on a Manhattan apartment with that kind of paycheck, yet it's a prestigious, wonderful job, so you need to do a *Law & Order* every year to supplement your income. And the funny thing is, big stars who I love recognize me from *Law & Order* more than a nything else I remember Sarah Silverman grabbing me and being like, *"Law & Order!"* And even when I showed up to work on *Stranger Things*, Winona Ryder's big thing was my silver thief character from a *Criminal Intent* episode So yeah, there was a certain David Harbour cult following in the Hollywood community around my work on *Law & Order*
Q2: *When did you first know you wanted to be an actor?*
HARBOUR: When I was five years old I played the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, and I loved it. I was a big hambone. Then when I got into high school I really wanted to act, but I had no examples of people who did that. I grew up in Westchester, New York, which was a lot of businesspeople, lawyers, doctors a very upper-middleclass community There were no examples of a working actor, so I didn't think it was possible I went to college and tried to study some other things, but then when I got to New York I realized, right out of college, that I just had to do it And so I waited tables
Q3: *You've been very open about the fact that you have bipolar disorder and are neuroatypical What does society not understand about being bipolar?*
HARBOUR: I mean, there's so much I would like to bring some light in terms of people not viewing madness as something alien to them. There's an interesting thing in our culture where we have to brand certain things as other than us because we're so terrified of them It's dangerous when we're segregating society so clearly into sane people and insane people, and I know that I've ridden that line. I have a lot of experiences on one side where I'm in an asylum and being treated like a crazy piece of trash, and then I've been in this other world where I'm treated like a big deal celebrity that people have to run around getting coffee for
Q4: *Your parents had you institutionalized when you were 25 How did that change you?*
HARBOUR: It was a voluntary institutionalization It was recommended because I was having your garden variety manic episode that a lot of bipolar people have, which is nonviolent but strange and confusing and disordered I think the best version of a bipolar person I've ever seen done on screen was Claire Danes in the first season of *Homeland*. She's just talking and not making much sense, but it's right on the edge of sense. It was sort of like that You hit a wall and realize there's a wall there, and you also realize you have an internal resiliency that's beyond anything you've ever known. The idea that I lost my mind and then came back and continued to act and to live in New York City revealed in me that I have mental fortitude, and it also gave me gratitude for every day that I'm not locked up Of course I still have stresses, but truly I can breathe easy every day and go, "There is a hell, and I've been there, and every day that I'm walking around in New York City, even if people don't like the movie I'm in, or whatever it is, I'm free."
Q5: *You attended Dartmouth College, an institution Newsweek once called one of America's drunkest colleges Did the school live up to its party reputation?*
HARBOUR: Yes Yes Yes. I d rank a ll the time in college I had a real problem with Dartmouth I wanted to be an actor, but I sort of felt I had to have a fallback plan or something. I did that a lot for my parents. I went to Dartmouth, and I was kind of angry and resentful and I drank a lot You could definitely drink a lot at Dartmouth It was cold all the time, so we would spend a lot of time in the basement, just drinking crappy beer But I take responsibility for my problem When I got out of Dartmouth I was in my early 20s, and I got sober I haven't looked back.

Q6: *You don't seem like a former Dartmouth fraternity member How did that happen?*
HARBOUR: That's the conundrum I was dealing with. I grew up in a community that wanted me to be one thing, and I had a soul that didn't want to be that thing. I felt human beings were different from me, and one way I could help to understand them was through this thing called acting It was something I felt compelled to do Had I had my complete druthers, I would have dropped out of high school at 16, moved to New York and auditioned and stuff, but I was in a world of prep schools and money and a certain way of being, and I didn't have enough fortitude to stand up to that I think ultimately that's where the drinking and anger come from Then you get out and realize over time that you might as well be yourself. I think that's what has been developing in me – even up to today.
Q7: *Let's talk Stranger Things What did it feel like to go from being a working actor to being part of a mass cultural phenomenon?*
HARBOUR: It was super fun, but it was very unexpected. We were just hunkered down making the show, and I was completely neurotic about whether or not I was good in it and whether or not the show was good I have no gauge anymore about whether people will like something. Then, the weekend it came out was unlike anything I've ever experienced. I've done a lot of work over the years, and usually what happens is two people from my past will text and be like, "Hey, man, you're great in Rake." That weekend, hundreds of people I hadn't spoken to — my phone lit up from all these contacts going, *"Stranger Things Stranger Things, Stranger Things."* And then these BuzzFeed articles came out about "Which *Stranger Things* character are you?" I was like, "Holy shit, I've never been a part of this." I'm so happy it happened with *Stranger Things*, because I love it so deeply.
Q8: *How about those articles on your dating history and your new status as a sex symbol?*
HARBOUR: It's a double-edged sword It's extremely gratifying even to be acknowledged as sexy when you're in your 40s, to be acknowledged as good, for people to like what you do It just makes you feel great I got into this business to move people, and clearly you're moving people in positive ways, and that's a beautiful thing For about the first three months I was on cloud nine, and then it started to become a little weird. I actually don't like to go out as much now. The fact that people assume they know you is very strange It feels like I'm on *The Truman Show*. Everybody has an impression of me before I even meet them, even at the laundry or the deli, and that's something I haven't dealt with most of my life And in some ways I miss my anonymity, some car will cut you off in the street and you'll go, "Motherfucker," and then they'll be like, "Oh, hey, man! You're great." And then you're like, Shit, I can't even yell at this guy!
Q9: *Do you think that as a kid you would have hung out with Mike Wheeler and the boys?*
HARBOUR: Yeah, because I think they're exactly like my crew. I was never really part of the popular kids in middle school, but I was not the nerdiest of the nerds either. There was a kind of a middle group that I feel Mike and his group occupy People ask me sometimes which character on the show I identify with the most, and it's Noah People thought I was a bit of a weird kid and overly sensitive, and so one of the reasons it was so fun to play Hopper was that I got to save that kid In a way, it was like I was saving myself
Q10: *Merriam Webster posted a GIF of you on Twitter as a visual definition of "dad bod." You've been a good sport about it, but does it ever sting a bit?*
HARBOUR: It does, but I'm into expanding people's idea of what's sexy, because I think our culture is almost anorexic in terms of what it views as sexy To me, human beings are sexy If you want to exploit the fact that my body isn't perfect but you find me sexy — if it's used in that context, and sometimes it is — then I'm cool with it Whatever gets you to broaden your scope and find your own Hopper in your world — that guy or that girl at the deli who has a beautiful soul but is a little bit fat or whatever — that's what I want to expand in this world I'm all for working out and being healthy, but this obsession with perfection, especially physical perfection, is ludicrous, and it's ultimately a losing battle. I don't care how beautiful you are, you're going to hit 60, if you're lucky, and you're not going to look so great. You might as well enjoy yourself and other people for more than what they are physically
Q11: *What was it like to go from being the "dad bod" champion to working with Ryan Reynolds's personal trainer to get in shape for Hellboy?*
HARBOUR: I couldn't do a lot of training because the thing is all prosthetics. A lot of what I was doing was power and strength training, and it does change your mind set When I'm working on a character, my subconscious starts to take over and I start to just do things and make choices like that character When I play Hopper, it's a certain way, and then when I played Hellboy it got into this kind of bestial thing The weight training and all that stuff kind of fueled this hulking horde — this kind of bold mentality that I really liked
Q12: *You go above and beyond with your fans when it comes to Twitter You attended one fan's senior-year photo shoot and officiated at another's wedding Will you do anything for your fans?*
HARBOUR: [Laughs] I won't do anything, but I got to this place with social media in general where it had become sort of an echo chamber. No good was coming of it, but I had a lot of feelings, so I was like, What can I do that would actually make people feel good and that would put me out there a little bit? I came up with these Twitter challenges. To me, because I've been through the gamut with social

IT'S IMPORTANT, EVEN THROUGH DEPRES SION, TO LOOK AT THINGS THAT SCARE YOU.

STYLING BY MICHAEL KINNANE. OPENING PAGES SHIRT BY KENNETH COLE UNDERSHIRT BY HANES. THIS PAGE T-SHIRT BY J CREW

media, I now feel it's a bit of a game of double dare where you want me to stand on the table and quack like a chicken or whatever. Anything I can do to provide a little more joy in this weird world we're living in right now that is simple and pure and just unadulterated fun, I'm down for.

Q13: *Speaking of Twitter challenges, you got enough retweets for Greenpeace to send you to Antarctica. Do you have hope for humanity's ability to solve climate change?*

HARBOUR: The simple answer is no. I think we're in a really bad place, and I don't know, with self-centeredness the way it is, that there's any way out. So yeah, I get depressed. But I think it's important, even through your depression, to continue to look at things that scare you. It truly is the most terrifying concern of our lifetimes, and it's the concern that drives all other concerns. If you have a problem with migrant caravans or illegal immigration, that's climate change. Food shortages and surpluses are happening in different areas and places are getting destroyed, and so people have to move. Most of the political concerns around this world stem from climate change. If we could make the earth a more uniformly palatable place to live, there would be fewer wars over territory, resources and things like that.

But even in the midst of inevitable defeat, you still have to seize the struggle, right? It's kind of the idea of Albert Camus's The Plague: We've still got to wake up every morning and go to work even if we know we're not going to stop the plague.

Q14: *Do you want to have kids one day?*

HARBOUR: I'm on the fence. To be honest, I don't want to have a kid if in 15 years the planet is dead and they're 15 years old. Also, we do have a certain thing in our culture where we deify family. It's like when anyone has a baby everyone's like, "Oh my God!" They're so happy for them. I want to imbue people who choose not to have babies with the same joy, because the greenest thing you can do for the entire planet is not to breed. I've done it for 43 years — but you can all call me a hypocrite and not a good environmentalist when I do have a son or daughter five years from now.

Q15: *A lot of your work evokes the soulful wounded leading men of the 1970s. Who are your acting heroes?*

HARBOUR: Certainly Jack Nicholson, Gene Hackman, Harrison Ford, Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss. All these guys from those 1970s films, which is where I learned what it was to be a man. When Stranger Things came along and I thought I could do that for another generation, it was so

gratifying. I don't feel we show as much on screen — or if we do, we give some nod to a character's damage but don't actually go into it. Their damage is too unpalatable for commercial entertainment and too indulgent for independent entertainment. It's hard to find that balance of a damaged hero you can get behind.

Q16: *In 2017, Stranger Things won a Screen Actors Guild Award and you gave a fiery speech calling out bullies and making the case for empathy. Where did that come from?*

HARBOUR: It's funny, because that speech has been interpreted by a thousand different people a thousand different ways. I get death threats from the people who thought it was about Trump supporters. For me, it genuinely was a cultural statement. I thought to myself, What would Hopper do? I've been a Hollywood outcast for so many years, but I wanted to give a bit of a cultural critique of the narcissism that we contribute to a culture that makes people feel alone, as opposed to the ultimate, fundamental reason for art, which is to make people feel included. One of the things I'm so proud of about *Stranger Things* is that, like the "dad bod" thing, people can feel included. They can feel they don't need a perfect body; they don't need to be so witty and smart and strong. They don't sit back in awe of the characters; instead they actually identify with them and then see that those characters can do heroic things. In a way, we were the nerdy kids at the table, so I thought I'd get up there and say, "Let's do this together. Let's contribute to a culture that creates empathy and destroys narcissism" — as opposed to getting dressed up and sort of being Kardashian about the whole thing.

Q17: *Which were more intense, the online comments or the IRL ones?*

HARBOUR: I think I was on the front page of Reddit or whatever, but there were also neo-Nazi death threats: "We know where you live" and "We got all the guns" and "We're coming for you, you piece of shit." A lot of people come up to me and say they love that speech. I've never had someone come up to me and say, "That speech you gave was a piece of shit, you dick."

Q18: *You talked in that speech about rejecting bullies. Were you bullied at all in school?*

HARBOUR: Oh yeah, I think probably most of us were. But I don't think bullying ends when you leave school. People are bullies in all kinds of ways. I have bullying qualities that I hate about myself. So that speech is as much for me as it is for other people. It's a reminder of things that I want in this world, ideals that I don't necessarily live up to myself.

Q19: If you had achieved your current level of success in your 20s, how do you think you would have handled it?

HARBOUR: It would have been awful. I would have been a jerk. I would have been mean to waiters. My narcissism would have been through the roof. I would have felt entitled and deserving. But the great thing about success happening after the age of 40 is you don't really care. If there is any kind of divinity that has guided my life, it's the things that have been prevented from happening. I wanted that kind of success in my 20s, and I was prevented from having it, and then I wanted it in my 30s, and it was prevented. Finally, after I turned 35, I remember completely giving up on that dream and thinking I was too old, and then it came to me. Like, okay, I got it — when I don't care, it comes to me.

Q20: *You've said that you've felt broken and alone most of your life. Has success helped?*

HARBOUR: Yeah. I feel more assured and more confident. Success doesn't make a dent in the fundamental issues I struggle with, like human relationships, but when I'm embroiled in that brokenness or that alone feeling, I can sort of rely on "Well, at least my apartment's nice." At least I have those things to fall back on. But the core issues are a lifelong trek through therapy and self-understanding, and those issues still exist and are just a product of being alive. As human beings we're these crazy and interesting creatures that have too much consciousness for our own good, these weird fleshy things that walk around and are confused. I'm not apart from that at all. ■

WEED WARRIORS

The pot we smoke, vape and eat owes its increased legal status to a handful of pioneering activists—and, in one case, a platform and war chest provided by Playboy

"PLEASE, PLAYBOY, KEEP UP YOUR FIGHT AGAINST OUR barbaric marijuana laws." This January 1969 entreaty from a reader, regarding a Texas man who had received a 50-year sentence for selling a matchbox full of marijuana for $5, was one of more than three dozen letters about marijuana the magazine printed that year alone. One reader had been busted for .87 milligrams — about "four seeds and 15 grains of leaf" — found in his former apartment. The husband of another faced up to 10 years in prison for possessing 20 milligrams, about seven thousandths of an ounce. At the time, selling pot to a minor in Georgia could get you life in prison; a second offense, the death penalty. A simple possession sentence in Louisiana? Up to 99 years in jail.

To most observers, the punishments clearly did not fit the crimes. Personal liberties were at stake, and that was enough to catch PLAYBOY's attention — though of course the pleasurable aspects of pot use fell squarely within the magazine's wheelhouse as well. PLAYBOY had been covering marijuana-related topics since at least 1960, when it convened a panel of jazzmen including Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie to talk about narcotics and music. Later that decade, the magazine published a professional assessment entitled *Pot: A Rational Approach*. "Not only is marijuana comparatively harmless on the face of all the evidence," wrote trailblazing psychiatrist Dr. Joel Fort, "but there are even reasons to believe it may be beneficial in some cases." The title could well describe the course of action that publisher Hugh Hefner felt his magazine should take when it came to the drug. It would not endorse but would explore, calling attention to unjust laws and outmoded thinking. Supporting Americans' prerogative to choose came naturally to Hefner, who early in his multi-installment *Playboy Philosophy* had declared he would maintain "the right to hoot irreverently at herders of sacred cows and keepers of stultifying tradition and taboo."

Then, in 1970, Hefner met an ally. The state of pot in America would never be the same.

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Keith Stroup, a young lawyer in Washington, D.C., who had been radicalized by the Vietnam war, was trying to establish the country's first pro-pot consumer advocacy lobby — a revolutionary idea well suited to the era. The newly formed Playboy Foundation, he thought, might grant him some much-needed support. Stroup applied for funds and was eventually invited to make his case to Hefner in Chicago, where he explained that with his nascent National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws he would campaign against marijuana prohibition and advocate for just laws and the fair treatment of users. A few days later, Stroup got an offer of $5,000 from the foundation, with the possibility of more funding should his organization demonstrate its value. It quickly did. "Within a few months, Playboy had committed to $100,000 a year in direct funding to NORML," Stroup says. The funding lasted throughout the decade. In addition, the magazine donated free full-page ads, which Stroup estimates brought in about $50,000 for NORML every time they ran, and Playboy held NORML fundraisers at both the Chicago and Los Angeles mansions. The magazine's coverage, including a 1977 *Playboy Interview* with Stroup, was also a boon to the group, which needed to win the hearts and minds of tokers and teetotalers if it was to effect real change.

"During the 1970s, whenever we would help some poor victim get out of jail who'd been locked up on a nonviolent marijuana offense, the *Playboy Forum* would feature that case," Stroup says. "It was incredibly helpful to us."

Stroup and other NORML lobbyists crisscrossed the country, seeking out state-level legislators willing to introduce decriminalization proposals and using the funding to send expert witnesses to the state hearings, "so that legislator looked like he knew what he was doing rather than looking like some radical," Stroup says. It worked: From 1973 to 1978, 11 states decriminalized marijuana, starting with Oregon. NORML also decided to take its battle to court, bringing the very first lawsuit against the government for classifying cannabis as a Schedule 1 drug — a designation it shares to this day with heroin.

Today, 66 percent of Americans support legalization — a far cry from the mere 12 percent that did in 1969. To a significant degree, this shift in public opinion is due to the work NORML has done over the decades. "But for that incredible support of the Playboy Foundation and Hugh Hefner individually," Stroup says, "I don't think NORML would have lasted beyond the first six months." We'll smoke to that. — *Cat Auer*

ILLUSTRATION BY **TARA JACOBY**

NORML founder Keith Stroup, in the February 1977 installment of the *Playboy Interview*, described the marijuana smokers whose rights he was fighting for as an "oppressed minority." Since as early as 1962, plenty of others have shared their thoughts on weed in the interview; here are five of our favorites.

"I THINK POT IS A LOT LESS HARMFUL THAN ALCOHOL FOR MOST PEOPLE. WHAT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE ON POT? THEY GET MELLOW!"

– WILLIE NELSON, NOVEMBER 2002

"WE USED TO BE TERRIFIED IF WE EVEN SAW SOMEBODY TAKING A PUFF ON A JOINT. BUT NOW, IF YOU'RE A PARENT, YOU PRAY TO GOD THAT ALL YOUR CHILD IS DOING IS SMOKING MARIJUANA."

– SPIKE LEE, JULY 1991

"THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MARIJUANA IS A SENSUAL STIMULATOR—AND THIS EXPLAINS NOT ONLY WHY IT'S FAVORED BY YOUNG PEOPLE BUT WHY IT AROUSES FEAR AND PANIC AMONG THE MIDDLE AGED, MIDDLECLASS, WHISKEY DRINKING, BLUENOSED BUREAUCRATS WHO RUN THE NARCOTICS AGENCIES."

– TIMOTHY LEARY, SEPTEMBER 1966

"I THINK IF MARIJUANA COULD REPLACE CIGARETTES AND LIQUOR, WE'D BE DOING EVERYBODY A SERVICE. MARIJUANA IS THE PEOPLE'S TRAFFIC."

– GERMAINE GREER, JANUARY 1972

"NOBODY OVERDOSES ON WEED. I'VE SPOKEN TO HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE—PATIENTS, SCIENTISTS, RESEARCHERS ... THINK IT SHOULD BE A LEGALIZED MEDICATION IN THIS COUNTRY."

– SANJAY GUPTA, SEPTEMBER 2015

DALLAS CHANDLER

Photography by: RYAN DWYER @LETSHOOT
HMUA: BRIDGET MARTINEZ @BRIDGETZGLAM
Model: @CHANDLER.DALLAS

Tell us something surprising about you?
 am probably the biggest Stars Wars nerd you will ever meet! a so rea y love horror films the gorier the better

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Yes absolute y! t has been a ife ong dream of mine to shoot for p ayboy My Aunt Mari yn Griffin was actua y in p ayboy of May 1983, and a ways wanted to grow up to be just ke her t s tru y an honor

What inspires you?
 f nd inspirat on in any creative medium, and think the way art can be expressed in the form of fi ms and written works is eterna y beaut fu

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modelling?
The thing I ove about mode ng is the fee ng of rea y being able to come alive and shed a these different ay-ers of everyday fe This a ows you to be whoever you want in front of that camera lens.

Who do you look up to in the modelling industry?
Pame a Anderson. She is such an icon c blonde.

What are some of your hobbies?
 absolute y love to read anything and everything it doesn't matter there is a most a ways a book in my hand! 'm a so a scrabb e addict and act ve cal of duty player. s cheeseburger eating considered a hobby? Because 'm great at that too.

Name three things on your bucket list?
1.) To be a Playboy P aymate
2.) Z p ne over the forest where Lord of the Rings was shot in New Zealand
3.) Kiss my so mate on every continent

Turn-ons
 ove confident men, nothing is more sexy than a man who knows what he wants. a so have a soft spot for mus cians and creative types The dea of being some one's muse is a ma or turn on for me.

Turn-offs
 don't ike iars or cheaters. Loya ty s everything to me.

Describe your perfect date
Staying in a night binge watching Netflix and order ng take out. So, I guess you cou d say Netfl x and Ch !

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
Paris wou d be my dea c ty to v sit because I have a ways heard that s the city to fa in love in.

What is your mantra?
Ask. Be ieve. Receive

FANS HAVE BEEN AWAITING HER NEXT ALBUM FOR THREE YEARS. CAN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY'S MOST FEARLESS (AND GENREDEFYING) ARTIST FINALLY BREAK THROUGH?

EVE BARLOW

lizzo

the INCOMPARABLE

STYLING BY JASON REMBERT. LEFT, LACE BODYSUIT BY YANDY. FEATHER BOA FROM NY VINTAGE. TIGHTS BY YANDY. RING AND EARRINGS BY HOUSE OF EMMANUELE. RIGHT, BODYSUIT BY YANDY. ROBE BY KONIVE B. TIGHTS BY YANDY. NECKLACE FROM NY VINTAGE.

LIZZO TOTTERS INTO THE KITCHEN, FLASHES OF HER legs peeking through fishnets, her silhouette wrapped in a bodice. The artist begins to improvise her way out of her stilettos with a riff on the Weeknd's "Can't Feel My Face."

"I can't feel my feet when I'm in *shoes*," she coos. "But I love it."

An order of pad thai arrives promptly at six P.M. She has been on set at this 1970s Barbie-themed Hollywood apartment since this morning, and she hasn't eaten all day. "I'm happiest when I'm working or eating," she says with a laugh that sounds like nothing less than a celebration of life. "Sometimes I can work and eat, like right now. That's when I'm real happy. Ha!"

Happiness isn't what Lizzo is serving; Lizzo serves positivity. Positivity is an outlook — it's something you have to actively practice. Sometimes positivity results in happiness. Yesterday Lizzo wasn't happy. On Twitter she was subtweeting someone who had upset her ("You a LYIN ASS NIGGA…IM SICK AND TIRED OF BEING TOLD YA BUM ASS FAIRYTALES"). She calls her online presence a "body positive persona." *Persona*. That's key. Her music matches that persona. Her most streamed song, "Good As Hell," is a petition to women to prioritize themselves in relationships: "If he don't love you anymore / Just walk your fine ass out the door."

Lizzo wears her moods publicly to counteract the false narrative that being "positive" means surfing a perpetual high. "I found when I'd meet people at shows they'd be like, 'Yo, are you always so happy?' And I'd be like, 'Why people be asking me that?' " she says, waving her lacquered talons. "If I'm only showing the most positive moments, there's nothing to root for." But, she warns, "I don't think everybody should do it. That's not their commerce. Keep taking pictures of your cat. You don't have to do the heavy lifting."

It's strange, the emotional intimacy we share online. I tell Lizzo this, and she nods. She knows that our culture of detachment creates opportunities for openness and likens her online relationships to a therapist-patient dynamic. Leaning on friends and family is harder. Your problems become their problems. "Social media cuts that mess out," she says. "I don't know how to describe it yet. This is new to all of us." You could say Lizzo is part of a vanguard that's forging a more symbiotic, empathetic purpose for social media, an increasing consciousness of what we say and how we choose to say it. The internet is real

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ADRIENNE RAQUEL**

life now, even without "that mess," cyber relationships go deep "It's not Myspace and LiveJournal anymore, bro," Lizzo says.

The internet can't address physical solitude, though. "I've been extremely sad," she says Lizzo, 30, has spoken previously about her lowest point She was 21 when her father died, and soon after she experienced homelessness. "When I'm really sad I have no perspective," she says. " 'This is the end! Nobody cares!' Having perspective is my remedy I'm gonna have the opportunity to experience the opposite of this What is the opposite of being lied to? Trust. So I meditate on trust. That's hard to do, though, sis. I don't wallow into the future or the past like I did. I ask, 'What am I feeling right now?' "

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Melissa Jefferson was born in Detroit and performed in her first marching band in the eighth grade She learned to rap in high school, coming to hip-hop late, her childhood was spent in church She co-founded the all-women ensembles the Chalice and GRRRL PRTY and studied applied music at the University of Houston In 2011, after her father's death, she moved to Minneapolis. There she struck up creative partnerships with Prince and, separately, producer Lazerbeak, with whom she produced her 2013 debut, *Lizzobangers*, on a shoestring budget. Her reputation continued to build with the 2016 EP *Coconut Oil*, and by 2018 she was touring with Florence and the Machine and Haim, guest judging on *RuPaul's Drag Race* and appearing on the digital cover of *Teen Vogue*

Last October she posted a video of herself playing the flute at a show — an instrumental interlude in her then unreleased song "Bye Bitch." Thirteen seconds in flanked by two backup dancers, she breaks into a choreographed routine, her left leg kicking forward in rapid fire, her arms pumping The audience erupts She takes her flute to the mike once again before delivering the song's final lyric: "Bitch, you emotional!" Lizzo captioned the video "HAVE U EVER SEEN A B ITCH PLAY FLUTE THEN HIT THE SHOOT?!" It has gained more than 5 million views and motivated her to release "Bye Bitch" on SoundCloud, *Rolling Stone* short-listed it as a "song you need to know," writing that it "barely scrapes the surface of what Lizzo is capable of as an artist "

Lizzo came to southern California "by osmosis" about three years ago MTV paid for her relocation as part of a deal for her to co-host *Wonderland*, a short-lived live performance show "I never said I'd move to L.A.," she says. She doesn't dislike Los Angeles "Of course, I don't like traffic or fault lines," she says, laughing. She doesn't party either, because Lizzo considers celebrity a choice. "I don't do famous people stuff Fame is a lifestyle. I'm not a famous person, so I don't live that lifestyle " For now, she goes only where she's needed: online and to venues. "Bitch, I'm not gonna go where I a in't invited," she says. "It could be Jesus's 35th birthday party at the 40 40 Club with Jay Z and Beyoncé turning water into wine If my name isn't on that list and those people don't have an emotional connection to me, I don't give a fuck."

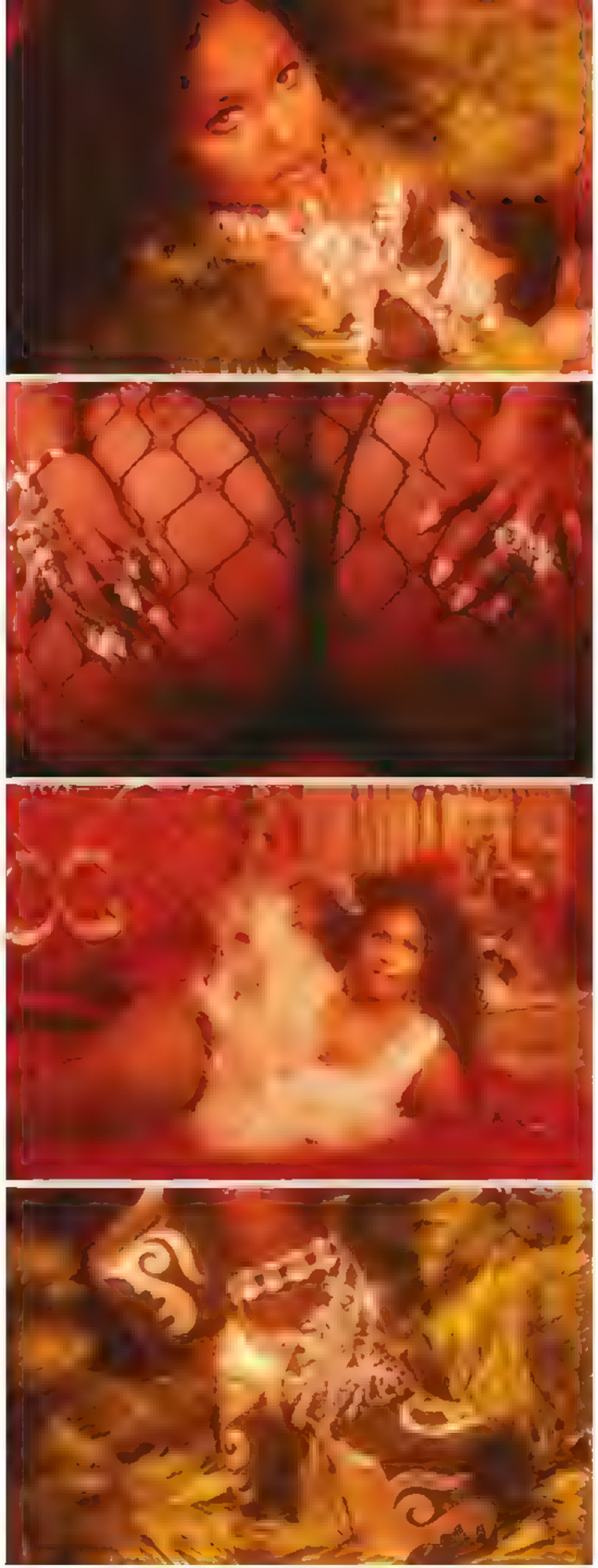
But social media attracts a lot of phonies too Does it ever get to be too much? "You better believe I'm gonna take me a break once I'm not needed. I don't l ike looking a t my phone a ll day. Phones burn my fingertips Look! Look at this burn on the tip of my finger!" She puts her finger in front of my nose. There is indeed a small patch of hardened skin. ("You so cute," she says with a giggle. "Your eyes crossed.")

It's not enough for pop to be entertaining in 2019 Having an A-list producer no longer guarantees artists a *Billboard* top 10 An artist needs to say something Luckily, Lizzo has always had something to say. In 2013 she independently released the music video for "Batches & Cookies." In one scene, she rubs down a topless man with butter In another, she stands outside government buildings in the Midwest with her sidekick, who is waving a rainbow flag. This was nearly two years before the Supreme Court decided *Obergefell v. Hodges* and half a decade before the creation of #20gayteen, an online LGBTQ movement launched by rising pop star Hayley Kiyoko that encourages queer people to fight back against repression.

When it comes to body positivity, she was an advocate before Lane Bryant turned the movement into a marketing campaign, before *Project Runway* began to feature plus-size models and before Sony's brief casting of Amy Schumer as Barbie. Her song "En Love" was released in 2015. "I'd never heard anybody say that before, so I thought, I'ma say it. I needed to hear it," she recalls "People at shows would be so shocked when I'd sing 'I'm in love with myself.' " But Lizzo isn't angry that corporations capitalize on change She argues that Beyoncé's use of the word *feminist* brought awareness to a new generation. "The important thing is making sure this shit don't become a trend. We gotta be undeniable. We gotta fix ourselves in the culture so that we're unshakable Body positivity has to be mainstream."

Lizzo also uses her position to promote diversity Today, she gets riled up talking about gender politics. "The way we talk about gender has to change," she says. "Gender doesn't really exist. We created social gender, so we gotta destigmatize it, take the importance off of skirt versus pants That's not even real, dog. What are you fucking talking about? 'This is a boys' club ' Get your dumb ass outta here. This is a girls' club, ho Shut up "

"THE IMPORTANT THING IS MAKING SURE THIS SHIT DON'T BECOME A TREND. WE GOTTA FIX OURSELVES IN THE CULTURE."



FROM TOP: FUR COAT BY ADRIENNE LANDAU; LINGERIE BY CURVE; MUSE NECKLACE FROM NY VINTAGE; LINGERIE AND TIGHTS BY YANDY; JEWELRY BY HOUSE OF EMMANUELE; LACE BODYSUIT AND TIGHTS BY YANDY; FEATHER BOA FROM NY VINTAGE; JEWELRY BY HOUSE OF EMMANUELE; FUR COAT BY ADRIENNE LANDAU; JEWELRY FROM NY VINTAGE

All of this manifests itself in her music "Scuse Me" from *Coconut Oil* is a letter of self-love "I don't need a crown to know that I'm a queen," she sings That became her slogan. Last year's "Boys" was a Prince-like number with a "SexyBack" type motif Just as Lizzo is free of shackles, her music defies genre. It mimics her story of outsiderdom. She wants her audiences to act regal —to feel entitled to do whatever the hell they want. "It's impossible for me to do what anybody else does. I tried and it wasn't good," she says

Her forthcoming album, *Cuz I Love You*, out April 19, has been in the making for three years She refuses to reveal anything about the project except that she's producing it with Ricky Reed, her collaborator since 2015. "This album is where Lizzo comes into her own not only as vocalist but as producer, arranger, overall visionary," Reed says. "We would have sessions where we wouldn't even record anything We would just sit down together with the productions and try different instruments, arrangements, forms There is not one split second of this album not touched by her."

"My individuality is a gift, but it's my biggest creative obstacle," Lizzo says. "I can do everything I wanna do everything. I can rap fast, sing big, say things people never said before." Her character voices are comical and powerful, she laces rhymes with intellect and oddities Rapping was her break, but it was also a mask. Reed helped her find her voice. "I could freestyle sing over any trap song That's safe, that's easy But what happens when I really unleash what I wanna say? I've learned not to be afraid of who I am." This album, it seems, will center around singing, not raps and jibes. "I thought, Yo, what would Aretha Franklin's rap record sound like in 2019?" she says, deadpan "She didn't hold back She was a G."

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The driving force behind Lizzo's compulsion as a truth sayer is a spiritual one She senses emotional turmoil around her. Star signs and charts are fixtures in her day "I've always felt the whole world, you know?" she says. "I don't think I'd be able to write songs if I wasn't an empath." Recently something's been up "These last couple weeks, sis?" She pretends to wipe sweat off her brow on this lukewarm December day. "Woo! They've been crazy It's universal — when you look at the news and the news looks like how you feel; when you listen to music and it sounds like how you feel. Everybody's having similar illnesses."

She references Michael Cohen, President Trump's former attorney "He said that Donald Trump led him from the light to darkness." Lizzo has always been a fan of the adage "It's darkest before dawn," but now she has a different read on it. "When you're in the moment, when it's dark, it's gonna get darker, but it's always gonna get light. Right now, it's dark until we snap and it'll lead us to the light " The lightness is coming in early 2019, according to her own clairvoyance, and perhaps not coincidentally, so is her new album. "Maybe that's why it took so long," she says. "We needed all this shit to want some medicine."

Lizzo may be what the music world needs, even if the industry has yet to signal the wide embrace she deserves. Until then, she counts her blessings. Today is one of them. "This is a literal dream," she says, looking around at her PLAYBOY shoot. "I watch movies about influential people's lives things they've done, boundaries they break. When you are yourself, you don't realize the impact you have. Sometimes I be forgetting the impact I can have This is one of those moments that remind me."

HOT TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

CAN'T WAIT TO POST ABOUT THE LATEST TREND NG TOPIC WITHOUT CONSIDERING BOTH SIDES? I'M RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

BY **APARNA NANCHERLA**

WHEN I AGREED TO WRITE A HOT TAKE ON hot takes, my first thought was *Damn, Daniel back at it again with the meta plans!* (My brain is now essentially a series of doctored memes.) Next, I went to the dictionary to figure out what exactly I had agreed to. *Merriam Webster* describes a hot take as "a published reaction or analysis of a recent news event that, often because of its time-sensitive nature, doesn't offer much in the way of deep reflection." Lacks deep reflection? Perfect. Very on brand for humanity's current iteration.

Let me back up, though. You should know my credentials. I'm well versed in strong opinions. I've been a stand-up comedian for the past decade-plus. By its very nature, stand-up is all about hot takes. You're onstage, your voice authoritatively amplified, and, usually in a stylized or performative way, you're expounding on theories such as why religion and gay rights are not mutually exclusive, or pointing out some otherwise unquestioned absurdity in life. Like, when will the world be ready for "Mambo No. 6"? (Answer: Anytime — but more Monica this round, please.)

Even the most abstract version of comedy has a point of view (which is just a fancy way of saying opinion). If people are laughing, they don't necessarily care if they don't agree with what you're saying. In fact, the standard response to stand-up is a series of equally strong opinions, as some of the audience will think you were "funny" and others, mostly on YouTube, will tell you to "kill yourself."

By virtue of my profession, then, I'm going on record as pro– hot take. And like many comedians, I spend a lot of time on Twitter — the land of hot takes, as opposed to the opposite, which you might call freezing nonsense. Everyone with the gumption to start an account, which we now know doesn't even require sentience, can dissent and polemicize to their heart's (or algorithm's) content.

Within free social media platforms, the hot take is handclap emoji, 100 percent emoji, fire emoji. But woe unto the content creator who missteps. Most people — celebrities or not — are one tweet or viral moment away from being "canceled."

The outrage pendulum swings all kinds of ways. The positive end of this is accountability movements like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter. The more cautionary trajectory is expecting the same rigid good versus-evil paradigms that often marginalize groups in the first place, painting their members as complete heroes or villains, forgetting that nearly all humans are a mix of both. It's scary to admit, but we all make mistakes. No one has a perfect take on everything, and nuance is crucial to understanding even those we perceive to be already on our side. (Oops, I'm veering into deep reflection now, and that's the opposite of clickbait—it's click wait.)

Like hot takes, stand-up comedy can be reductive. You have to sacrifice gray areas for the simplicity of the joke. If you include every point of view, you dilute the punch line. That's not to say those views shouldn't be voiced — in fact, giving voice to nuance is often how progress happens. But it's also the reason hot takes can't account for everyone and everything.

In fact, in this very piece, by trying to acknowledge multiple angles of the *what* and *why* and *how* of hot takes, I essentially milked mine down to a tepid pudding. But perhaps that's why we find hot takes so comforting: They're decisive in a way the adult world often isn't. But beyond all the absolutes, it's nice to remember that many of us are trying our best. Tepid or not, that's worth at least a pudding, if not more. (And if you freeze the rest of that pudding? Pudding pops!) ■

STYLING BY JENNY HAAPALA

LEFT: BLOUSE BY FRAME DENIM; RIGHT: SHIRT BY OUR LEGACY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRIS SCHOONOVER**

NO COMMENT

HE WANTS EVERYONE'S VOICE TO BE HEARD—AS LONG AS IT'S NOT UNDERNEATH EPISODES OF HIS TV SHOWS

BY **ADAM PALLY**

HERE'S A HOT TAKE ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH: I don't believe it should be legal to post comments on the same web page as the content — and please don't @ me* for this. Who am I? I'm film, television and now YouTube personality Adam Pally. I've been in many of your favorite movies and on TV shows that haven't been successes.

One year, I starred in a movie with dogs that finished in last place at the box office on the same day two separate networks canceled the two TV shows I was on (I'm exaggerating, though some days it does feel that way). Needless to say, internet comments have been part of my life and career since I started in comedy, all the iPhones ago.

I can honestly say I have never read one online comment that changed my life for the better. Do I appreciate the compliments? Sure, but as is human nature, the negative ones drown out the positive ones. Am I a big Hollywood snowflake baby? Probably. But what I'm asking is, Why are we so excited to hurt each other in the most visible place possible, just because we can?

I'm not saying it should be illegal for us to express our opinions on the internet. I do it regularly — on Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, subreddit, subreddit of subreddit. But I wouldn't do it underneath someone's content, because I'm not gonna talk shit to your face. I'm gonna talk shit behind your back, when I think there will be no consequences for you or for me. You know, like a normal human being.

It truly makes America special that people from all walks of life can voice how they feel in private or in public. As an artist — yes, I am wearing a scarf as I write this — I would never challenge anyone's right to speak his or her mind. But if you want to comment about a video, do it on another page. I'm simply asking for a separation between the media and the opinions of the public via one small fucking link.

A comment is different from a review or an opinion. A comment is a bother. Our thoughts on what we're experiencing shouldn't be directly associated with the experience's success or failure. And I see you getting ready to @ me* underneath the online version of this article, but if you do, PLAYBOY will put the comments on another page. (I probably should have checked with PLAYBOY first before assuming they would put these comments on another page.)

Imagine online commenting in the real world. In no way, shape or form would the Louvre let me walk in wearing a mask, tell everyone my name is baesaprocky349 and scream in front of the *Mona Lisa* that she's not all that — that, actually, she's not looking at me from every angle. I'd be taken out quicker than some of my shows have been taken off television. Am I saying my new show, *Champaign ILL*, on YouTube Premium, is the *Mona Lisa*? I sure am. I can say whatever I want, this is my article.

Internet comments are dangerous, and they've been hit with restrictions due to sexual harassment, racism and anti-Semitic and homophobic trolling. So please stand behind me for commonsense internet commenting laws. I realize this doesn't appeal to everybody, which is why I'm trying to convince you by calling them *common sense*.

Speaking of trolling, I have no stats to back this up, but I am positive Russian bots are doctoring *Happy Endings*'s Hulu viewership. There's no way we're that low.

That reminds me: While I have your attention, please watch *Champaign ILL* on YouTube Premium. And now that I think about it, feel free to leave a comment. I'm nothing if not a man of no convictions. ■

**I'm still not entirely sure what "don't @ me" means*

PLAYBOY'S PARTY JOKES

IN HONOR OF OUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR AND THIS ISSUE'S THEME, WE PRESENT AN AMUSING ASSORTMENT, PULLED FROM THE ARCHIVES, ON THE VAGARIES OF SPEECH

HAVING just been criticized in a party conclave, the politician wryly told newsmen, "I've just learned the difference between a cactus and a caucus."

"What's that, Senator?" he was asked.

"In the case of a cactus," he retorted, "all the pricks are on the outside."

OUR Unabashed Dictionary defines censor as a person who sticks his no's into other people's business.

THE editor of a small weekly newspaper, in a rage over several congressional bills that had recently been passed, ran a scathing editorial under the headline HALF OUR LEGISLATORS ARE CROOKS. Many prominent local politicians were incensed, and tremendous pressure was exerted on him to retract the statement. He finally succumbed to the pressure and ran an apology with the headline HALF OUR LEGISLATORS ARE CROOKS.

A woman visited her doctor for her annual exam. The doctor asked, "Are you and your husband sexually active?"

"Yes," the woman said. "We have verbal sex every day."

"Verbal sex? I think you mean oral sex," the doctor said.

"I mean verbal sex," the woman said. "Every morning my husband and I pass each other in the hall and say, 'Fuck you!'"

GRAFITTO spotted on a tavern wall: THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH (IF THAT'S OKAY WITH THE BEST OF YOU).

AT a recent Georgetown reception for a retiring diplomat, two State Department underlings struggled with small talk. Finally, one asked the other, "Tell me, Harry, what do you consider the two most interesting topics of conversation nowadays?"

"Sex and politics, I guess," Harry replied.

"I agree with you there," said the first, nodding. "What about the second topic?"

THE young reporter was interviewing a woman who had just reached her 100th birthday.

"To what do you attribute your remarkable good health?" he asked.

"Well," she replied, "I've always eaten moderately, worked hard, I don't smoke or drink, and I keep good hours."

"Have you ever been bedridden?" the reporter asked.

"Well, yes," said the elderly lady, "but don't put that in your paper."

AMERICANS are people who insist on living in the present, tense.

AN underground newspaper suggested recently that the marijuana question could easily be settled by a joint session of Congress.

THE attorney was briefing Mrs. Harris before calling her to testify. "You must swear to tell the truth," the lawyer warned.

"Do you understand?"

"Yes. I'm to swear to tell the truth."

"Have you any idea what will happen if you don't tell the truth?" he asked.

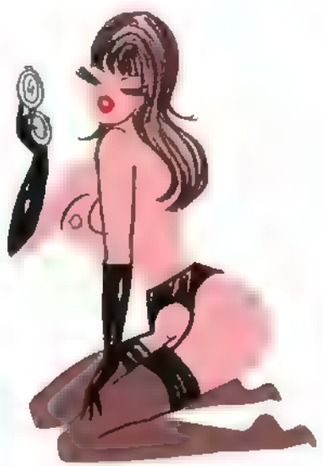
"I expect," she replied, "our side will win."

CERTAINLY, America has its problems," the pompous politician roared. "But we're still the only people in the world who are free to criticize our courts, our Congress and our president."

"That's what you think," the foreign diplomat retorted. "People all over the world are criticizing your courts, your Congress and your president."

OUR Unabashed Dictionary goes on to define *sex survey* as "a sermon on the mount."

SIGN at the entrance of a nudist colony: PLEASE BARE WITH US.



BLOPER

"This is Jake. He's not politically correct or even generally correct."

EMILY QUINN *ROSSETTI*

Photography by **JESTON BRANDON @PERFECTLYFLAWLESSPHOTO)**
MU A **NICHELLE @NICHELLEMUA** *Model* **@MISSEMILYQUINN**

Tell us something surprising about you?
'm an art st deep-down Growing up, was the qu et gir in school who was unusua y good at drawing, and wou d a ways show up with paint all over my hands, wearing some wacky outfit haha

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
was so excited! I've wanted to be in P ayboy for as long as can remember

What inspires you?
Blonde bombshe s of the past - classic 50s pinups like Mari yn Monroe/Jane Mansfie d and glamour mode s of the 80s and 90s.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in modeling?
Because I love my body and being a woman! Mode ng for me is one of the many ways in which I get to embrace my womanhood and sexua ity whi e also getting to p ay dress-up

Who do you look up to in the modeling industry?
Pam Anderson and Mari yn Monroe

What are some of your hobbies?
Cooking, going to the beach, do ng anything outside, taking cand e it bubb e baths, concerts and festiva s, decorating, and playing with cute dogs

Name three things on your bucket list?
have so many! Backpacking through Europe for a month taking s nging essons, and moving to the beach

Turn-ons:
Confident, adventurous, amaz ng sense of humor, makes me augh, outdoorsy, compassionate towards anima s, knows how to take the ead

Turn-offs:
Bad k sser, cock ness, negativ ty, being boring/super submissive, only being nterested n sports and dr nking

Describe to us your perfect date
Spending an afternoon at the beach, getting some rea y good ice-co d margaritas, and going to a concert afterwards!

Which world capital would you most like to visit, and why?
Definite y Paris! It seems ike such a beaut ful, creative, and romantic city I'm rea y just drawn to everything about Parisian cu ture think it wou d spark some creativ ty in me.

What is your mantra?
f you dream of someth ng and believe in it enough, it can definite y come true

THE GREEN SCARE

THE TRUMP ADM NISTRATION HAS BEEN CENSOR NG GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS, SIDEL NING FEDERAL WORKERS AND D SCOUNTING EVIDENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. S IT TOO LATE TO SAVE THE PLANET?

BY
CIARA O'ROURKE

On November 8, 2017, exactly one year after Donald Trump was elected president, the official Twitter account of Joshua Tree National Park had something to say. "An overwhelming consensus — over 97 percent — of climate scientists agree that human activity is the driving force behind today's rate of global temperature increase," the account tweeted. "Natural factors that impact the climate are still at work, but cannot account for today's rapid warming."

It was a sunny, dry desert day in Joshua Tree, with temperatures climbing to 75 degrees. Only five months earlier, President Trump had withdrawn the United States from the Paris Agreement, a commitment by 184 countries to curb global warming and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by implementing new environ mental policies. As Joshua Tree's Twitter feed stated in a follow-up tweet, "Emissions from burning of fossil fuels have increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This amplifies the greenhouse effect. Human activity is affecting the land, oceans, & atmosphere, altering the balance of the climate system & causing global changes."

Michael Mann, an outspoken climate scientist and Pennsylvania State University professor who earlier that year had rebuked a congressional committee for dismissing scientific research, thanked @JoshuaTreeNPS for its tweets, albeit with an ominous note. "I hope this account remains active and in your hands. .," he posted.

Perhaps more than any president before him, Trump understands the power of social media, and @JoshuaTreeNPS's tweets undercut the president's views on climate change. Trump has called global warming a Chinese hoax and doubts whether humans are even contributing to it. One of his first actions as president was placing a social media gag order on departments such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture.

Many of the president's political appointees have expressed similar doubts about human-caused climate change. Scott Pruitt, who helmed the EPA from February 2017 to July 2018, once said scientists aren't certain human activity is "a primary contributor." Energy Secretary Rick Perry argues that natural causes, not carbon dioxide, are the main drivers. And Ryan Zinke, who resigned from Trump's Cabinet in December 2018, has said the cause of climate change "is far from being definitively resolved."

Zinke's former domain, the Department of the Interior, employs scientists and natural resource managers across its many bureaus and offices, including the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and the National Park Service. In all, the department employs some 70,000 people. After Joshua Tree's account tweeted about climate change, Zinke reportedly summoned the park's superintendent, David Smith, to Washington, D.C.

According to a December 2017 story published by *The Hill*, Zinke brought Smith to his office to reprimand him. "Zinke made it clear to Smith that the Trump administration doesn't want national parks to put out official communication on climate change," *The Hill* reported. Zinke's office disputed that description of the meeting.

Michael Halpern, deputy director of the Center for Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists, says the situation was "absurd." But it is also worrying, and a warning to all national park employees "that they're going to get the same kind

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DEREK BRAHNEY**

of tongue-lashing if they share anything about global warming," he says. "It only takes a few scapegoats to send a message to an entire agency that they should be keeping their heads down."

Kyla Bennett, a former EPA scientist and lawyer who now works with the nonprofit watchdog group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), speaks every day to scientists working for the government. "People are frightened," she says. "They're frightened they're being watched, that their cell phones are going to be confiscated and looked at, that their personal computers are going to be confiscated. They are afraid."

• • •

Last year, the Union of Concerned Scientists and Iowa State University surveyed scientists from 16 federal agencies about their experiences working in the Trump administration. The report, "Science Under President Trump," includes accounts of censorship, self-censorship and political interference. About 630 survey respondents at agencies that work on climate change, or 18 percent of the sample group, agreed or strongly agreed that they had been asked to omit the phrase *climate change* from their work.

"We've been told to avoid using words like climate change in internal project proposals and cooperative agreements," reported one respondent from the National Park Service.

Another 700 respondents said they'd avoided working on *climate change* or using the phrase despite having received no explicit orders to do so. "Survey results also suggest that communication issues extend beyond censorship of science to the right of scientists to speak about their work to the public, the news media and at professional meetings," the report stated.

This winter, PLAYBOY interviewed more than a dozen current and former federal employees, climate scientists and advocacy groups about how federal employees discuss climate science under the Trump administration. Some describe being sidelined or point to scientists scrubbing the phrase *climate change* from reports and grant applications. Others say they can't comfortably mention global warming for fear of coming under scrutiny.

Their stories aren't universal. Scientists at some agencies say the administration hasn't hindered their work. But many others express deep fears about both job stability and their research. They don't want to risk disrupting the continuity of climatechange data, some of which has been collected over decades, by drawing unfavorable attention to their studies. All but one current federal employee we interviewed asked to remain anonymous.

"Everyone is so terrified," says Betsy Southerland, who worked at the EPA for more than 30 years and retired as director of science and technology in the agency's water office in July 2017. Before she left, staffers authoring technical reports were already replacing the phrase *climate change* with *extreme weather events*, Southerland says. "We were self-censoring."

The reason for that, she explains, is EPA employees want to protect their ability to release research that has been under way for years, well before Trump's election. Michael Cox, a climate-change advisor who resigned after 25 years with the EPA, noticed self-censorship in the Seattle office where he worked. People stopped saying "climate change" in meetings, he says, adding that the "climateready water utilities" program turned into "creating resilient water utilities." Overall, employees seemed uncertain about what they could or couldn't say and write.

On March 31, 2017, Cox submitted his resignation letter to Pruitt. He was out the door. He could safely make some noise.

"I am writing this note because I, along with many EPA staff, are becoming increasing [sic] alarmed about the direction of EPA under your leadership," he wrote. Cox criticized the administration for denying fundamental climate science, slashing the budget and appointing political staffers openly hostile to the agency. "If, by some miracle you or your staff actually read this note, I can only hope you take a step back and realize that you are the leader of an organization of very hardworking, dedicated professionals who believe deeply in their work."

It turns out someone did read Cox's letter. Ten days later, a lawyer filed a public-records request for Cox's correspondence when he resigned, according to *The New York Times*. The resulting e-mails revealed the names of dozens of agency officials, including ones Cox describes as colleagues who shared his concerns over management. The agency, which did not respond to PLAYBOY's interview request, later hired the same lawyer to do "media monitoring" at the EPA.

• • •

Federal employees, when working, don't have the same free-speech rights as private citizens. Legally, it's a distinction between right and privilege, a precedent set by the 2006 Supreme Court case *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, in which the court ruled that speech by a public official isn't protected when expressed as part of their job.

Jeff Ruch, executive director of PEER, says this distinction is being wielded for partisan ends. According to Ruch, George Luber, an environmental health professor and leading expert on the disease effects of climate change, has been under investigation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention since March 2018, in part because he didn't get renewed agency approval to write a 2015 textbook. The head of the CDC's former Climate and Health Program (established in 2009 and effectively discontinued in December), Luber is now barred from going to his government office without permission, and if he does enter the office, he and his car are searched, according to Ruch. Luber is forbidden from speaking, responding to interview requests or answering congressional inquiries. Luber's dismissal was recommended in October, Ruch says, but walked back after Ruch took the story to *The New York Times*. Ruch suspects the CDC was self-censoring because Luber is a prominent voice in the science community. The CDC did not answer questions about Luber or about how its employees can discuss climate change at work and in public.

Ruch calls PEER a "shelter for battered staff." He also fields queries from scientists trying to publish their research, as only two of the 18 federal science-based agencies surveyed allow employees to submit their work to a publication without prior approval.

"There's no doubt the Trump administration is editing scientific documents to the point where they're removing, for example, references to anthropogenic causes of climate change," PEER's Bennett says. "They are eliminating entire climate jobs and teams. It has gotten to the point where federal employees are afraid to even use the words."

According to Bennett, department heads in many cases haven't officially directed scientists to stop using the phrase *climate change*, but "they've gotten the message loud and clear." They abide, she says, because their positions are precarious and they don't want to risk losing them. Some scientists will communicate with Bennett only through encrypted mobile apps; others call from burner phones.

Halpern, of the Union of Concerned Scientists, thinks some of the challenges over letting federal employees speak freely to the public and press stem from the aftermath of September 11. Under the guise of national-security concerns, federal employees became less accessible and control over speech from government workers increased significantly, he says.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is one of the most permissive agencies: NOAA employees don't need permission to talk to reporters, the agency said in an e-mail to PLAYBOY. U.S. Geological Survey employees, by comparison, must be granted permission before speaking to the press. "CDC scientists were told last year they needed to check with superiors before complying with even the most basic data requests from the press," Halpern says. "We know people are less likely to tell the unvarnished truth if their bosses are listening or if they feel they'll be reprimanded for saying the wrong thing in the eyes of their political superiors."

That pressure is not felt evenly by all employees. Because the EPA is a regulatory agency tasked with enforcing rules on businesses and protecting endangered species, staffers may face more political and public scrutiny. But there are also unwritten rules, Halpern says. "Most nefarious is that a lot of directives aren't written down or communicated. They're simply hinted at."

Joel Clement was the director of the Office of Policy Analysis at the Department of the Interior. He was at home in his Washington apartment when a friend called one Thursday night in June 2017. "Check your e-mail," his friend said. He had been reassigned, and he wondered if Clement had also been removed from his position. A message was waiting for Clement in his in box. He too had been reassigned, in his case to a job in an accounting office overseeing royalty income from oil and gas operations around the country. It was part of a purge, he alleges. DOI did not respond to questions about Clement.

NO ADMINISTRATION IS PERFECT, "BUT WHAT WE'RE SEEING NOW IS UNPRECEDENTED."

No supervisor spoke to Clement before his reassignment, but he says he fared better than some of his colleagues, who had been forced to move across the country with their families to begin unfamiliar jobs. Many were shifted into positions for which they were ill suited. Clement counted himself in that group. He wasn't an accountant. But, he says, when he reported to work at his new office, the employees were wonderful, bending over backward to try to train their new boss on something he knew nothing about.

Eventually, though, having lost the job he left the private sector for, "I decided to keep my voice," he says. Clement reported what had happened to the Office of Special Counsel in July, and in October he resigned.

• • •

Former U.S. Representative Lamar Smith, who was chair of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee before the Republicans lost their majority in the 2018 midterms, chastised scientists two years ago for ignoring "the basic tenets of science" and pushing a personal agenda to justify claims about climate change. "Alarmist predictions amount to nothing more than wild guesses," he said.

It was March 29, 2017, and Penn State's Michael Mann, who was appearing before the committee to discuss global warming, fired back. "If you get attacked every time you publish an article," he said, "if that causes you to become subject to congressional inquiries and Freedom of Information Act requests, obviously that's very stifling, and I think the intention is to cause scientists to retreat." The message to "the entire research community," he said, "is if you too publish and speak out on the threat of human-caused climate change, we're going to come after you."

Many were wary of the Texas representative's subpoena powers after Trump was elected. (IF YOU LIKE THE INQUISITION,

awaiting political reviews that weren't required in previous administrations. Or research proposals being rejected or refused by political appointees. Funding woes. Self policing. "If you don't have to say 'climate change,' don't say it," she says, "because it's like waving a red flag to a bull." No administration is perfect, says Lauren Kurtz, executive director of the Climate Science Legal Defense Fund. Every modern administration has been accused of politicizing science — "but I do think what we're seeing now is unprecedented."

• • •

"It's not a secret the Trump administration is not a fan of science," says U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientist Mark Williams (not his real name). But he hasn't been told explicitly or through veiled threats to distance himself and his work from climate science. "The mandate is to use the best available science, and that hasn't changed," says Williams, who has worked at the USFWS for about a decade.

The agency has, though. Sally Jewell, interior secretary under Obama, would send weekly video updates to staff; at press time, the USFWS under Trump remained without a director two years into his term. Still, Williams says, "the tendrils of the administration really go down only so far." With some restrictions, scientists are free to talk about their research with the public, says USFWS chief of public affairs Gavin Shire.

Thomas Miller (not his real name) supports the military's scientific research in the Arctic and has worked for the federal government for more than a decade. During this time, he says, the mandate has been constant and clear: Employees who are not public affairs officers do not speak to the public. He keeps a personal Facebook page, where he posts updates and the results of research, but he tries to keep it apolitical. He was concerned, though, when he read reports after Trump's election that the incoming administration was stripping data from public websites. When a guerrilla science movement emerged to preserve that information on independent sites, Miller shared the locations of some data sets with the organizers to save that information.

Outside his work group, Miller generally doesn't talk about climate change — but not because a superior has suggested he shouldn't. "The military as a whole skews conservative," he says. "It's not worth getting into conversations with people who are sitting there denying science."

More broadly, he thinks conservatism is the root of what he calls a "chilling effect" on science in the federal government. But Todd Lewis (not his real name), a research scientist at NOAA, says the political appointees at that agency "are actually fairly well-informed people, which I don't believe to be the case for most of the political appointees for other jobs. At this stage, unlike at the EPA, our research isn't being heavily impacted."

He has noticed pushback on press releases, but he says that was common in previous Republican administrations. Ideally, a press release will include context to educate the public about the issue, but today there's more pressure to stick only with what appears in the research the agency is publicizing.

Notably, in November the Trump administration did not publicize volume two of the *Fourth National Climate Assessment* report, which concludes that humans are causing climate change. It is a massive and dire study that federal and volunteer scientists, including Hayhoe, one of the lead authors, spent years working on. The government instead quietly released the findings on Black Friday, the busiest shopping day of the year.

Volume two is endorsed by 13 federal agencies, including the EPA and the Department of Defense. As media attention on the publication grew, the president's administration began to disavow its findings, suggesting it was biased or problematic. Trump said he didn't believe it.

Hayhoe estimates that in the more than two years she spent working on the latest *Climate Assessment*, she could have published up to 10 of her own studies. The report involved hundreds of unpaid hours of work for others too. As someone not employed by the federal government, Hayhoe feels a responsibility to speak carefully and clearly on behalf of the hundreds of scientists who worked on the report. Many can't speak for themselves, she says.

"This *Assessment* was a sacrifice by every single person," Hayhoe says. "But it was a sacrifice made with full awareness that the climate is changing. It's us. It's here, and every human on the planet and especially in the United States needs to understand how climate change is already affecting us and the places we live. We feel a moral responsibility to share what we know."

Hundreds of scientists have left the federal government since Trump took office. His election could disrupt the next generation of scientists, young graduates who "have decided not to go into this area because of uncertainty," says Jim White, an environmental scientist and dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Of course, thousands of scientists still work for the government. Todd Lewis, at NOAA, says they're keeping their heads down. "We have to keep our records going," he says. "We can't afford to play political games and risk long-term records somehow being interrupted."

There is another concern among scientists and their advocates: that the *Fifth National Climate Assessment*, due in 2022, will come under heightened scrutiny. They fear other projects will be canceled or more workers will abandon the agencies for posts where they can work more freely. But the biggest loss, according to Mark Williams of the USFWS, is time. Even if in two (or six) years environmental policies are reinstated and regulations again enforced, the planet will not have stopped warming.

"A lot of things can change pretty much immediately as soon as a new administration takes office," he says. "But you never get that time back."

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Many climate scientists have changed the way they talk about global warming. Hayhoe says the most effective place to start a conversation on climate change is by finding common ground. An evangelical Christian, she tries to connect with people over their values — having enough clean water to grow crops, say. And she's not alone: A growing cadre is framing climate change as a moral and ethical dilemma, according to White. From his perch as a professor, White is watching recent graduates take jobs that allow them to blend science with advocacy — working at Protect Our Winters, for example — and lobby for climate-friendly policies.

"It's a really strange world when obvious physical truths are pushed aside by tweets and Facebook posts that are clearly wrong but manage to capture people's attention," he says. As a scientist and an educator, he's worried about this trend. It undermines the scientific business model. But, he reasons, it also compels scientists to learn how to advocate for their discipline. They're becoming more literate on how to effectively talk to laymen.

Take Michael Cox, the former climate-change advisor who resigned from the EPA. He has reached a point where he doesn't believe the science of climate change will gain traction with most people. "We've politicized this as a science debate," he says. "It's not a science debate. It's a values debate. Crossing the mountain pass from western Washington to the more rural and conservative east side, you aren't going to talk about climate change. You ask them about water."

"Scientists have sat on the sidelines for a long time," says Clement, who now works to expose political interference in science for the Union of Concerned Scientists. He and his colleagues were taught to maintain their integrity or stay neutral. But "they're the ones who most need to speak up right now."

Meanwhile, Hayhoe would welcome the opportunity to connect with Trump, but only if he were genuinely interested in engaging on the subject — and so far, she's seen no evidence of that. But if she ever does, she knows what she would say to him. "The world stands at a turning point, which may determine civilization. Do you want to be remembered as the hero who saved the world?" ■

YOU'LL LOVE THE HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITEE, read one *Mother Jones* headline.) But Smith had warred with scientists during Barack Obama's presidency too. In 2015 he subpoenaed hundreds of internal e-mails from NOAA staffers after an agency scientist produced a study that found there was never a global-warming hiatus, as some believed.

Halpern remembers Smith's request as a "huge intimidation tactic" — but, he says, "attacks on government scientists predate this administration. It's not something the Trump administration invented, but it's something they've aggressively pursued."

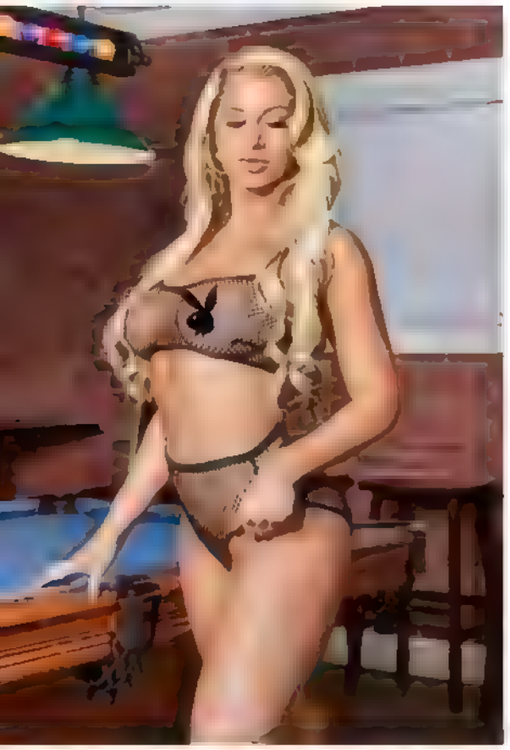
PEER's Bennett, for example, was a whistle-blower at the EPA during the Clinton administration and considers her previous work nonpartisan. Both Republicans and Democrats have interfered with science or regulatory enforcement to a certain extent, she says. But both environmental enforcement and science overall are suffering the most under the current administration.

Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, who has contributed to multiple federally mandated National Climate Assessment reports, asserts that when President George W. Bush was in office, there "absolutely was censorship. The Bush administration's approach was to edit or censor documents themselves." Hayhoe, who teaches at Texas Tech University, adds, "You'd send a draft in for review and you'd get these comments back and be like, 'Well, you know, this is not accurate.'"

Since Trump was elected, Hayhoe has received dispatches from her federal colleagues about research proposals languishing on desks,

STELLA ANDREWS

Photography by **JESTON BRANDON @PERFECTLYFLAWLESSPHOTO**
MUA **NICHELLEMUA @NICHELLEMUA**
Model **@STELLAANDREWSSS**



Describe yourself in three words.
Smart, Sexy, Outgo ng

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy?
Yes of course. was very exc ted to shoot w th Perfect yf aw ess since his p ctures are so inspiring

What was it like starting out as a model?
At first, was just using my phone for pictures and one of my c ose fr ends called me up one day to shoot with him. At first, was apprehens ve, but once started shooting, had never fe t so confident.

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far?
My biggest chal enge thus far is being ab e to mu t task my day to day "regu ar" life as we l as trave ng and shooting for d fferent shoots.

Describe your perfect day off when you are not modelling?
Be ng act ve in any way! ove going for ong wa ks, go ng to the beach or going to the gym

Do you feel more like a city person or a country person?
would be in-between. ove how fast pace the city is, but I a so ove a relaxing night ins de by myse f!

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
Austra ia.

Do you have a secret talent?
A kinds use your imaginat on.

A guilty pleasure?
Anything sweet- Choco ate, ce cream, etc

Which song is certain to make you cry whenever you hear it?
To be honest, none! I am not a very emotiona person.

What is your favourite word in any language and what does it mean?
Money- it's the universa language.

Any last words you would like to share with the readers?
just want to take the time to thank a of my nstagram fo lowers and supporters. There are so many beaut fu and ta ented individua s in th s wor d and being ab e to be published in a magaz ne like P ayboy is an absolute dream!

THE PLAYBOY SYMPOSIUM

GUEST EDITED BY **EVAN PRICCO**

Playboy taps **JUXTAPOZ**'s editor in chief to assemble a special multimedia exploration of art, freedom and activism. Here, six rising artists present works that further conversations and ignite new ones

It's amazing how, in the not so distant past, some of the best American art decorated your neighborhood post office. And perhaps even more surprising is the fact that this idea — that tax dollars should be used to make art a part of daily life — was a mandate from the U.S. government.

Under the New Deal's Works Progress Administration, or WPA, which in turn created the Federal Art Project, the government prioritized putting art to work. Of course the United States wasn't the first country to do so; just about any civilization you can name has a history of beautiful public architecture, but for Depression era America it was a declaration of confidence and creativity. The country needed to make a name for itself on the global art stage, and the local post office was going to help it get there. So if you went to the mail drop in Kellogg, Idaho in 1941, you would see the mural *Discovery* by the then emerging American artist Fletcher Martin hanging above the postmaster's door.

These days, art, especially in connection to politics, looks less like it did during the heyday of the WPA and more like an extension of grassroots protest and advocacy. You could argue that artists, designers, musicians and poets spread creative capital for Barack Obama throughout the 2008 presidential campaign — so much so that many believed Shepard Fairey's *Hope* posters had been bankrolled by the candidate. What originated as an organic image became the emblem of a world in which art and politics could exist hand in hand.

The government may not have been paying for the arts, but in some ways, the transformative political experience that we saw with Fairey's *Hope* helped spawn a new movement. Run the clock forward to the 2016 election, and one can't forget how a particular candidate sparked perhaps the most outrageous protest art America has seen, with "Make America Great Again." That candidate — inspired, perhaps unwittingly, by 20th century masters of the propaganda poster — ended up increasing the budget for the National Endowment for the Arts after threatening for more than a year to gut its programs. I swear he did it by accident.

In an era when there seems to be a constant struggle to identify what America is, or should be, art reflects the moment and at the same time fights against the notion of singularity. Those early WPA organizers understood that art in daily life was a necessary condition for healthy discourse. As we have collectively stepped away from this federally sanctioned practice, the myth of our unified identity has become evident.

There's a reason public art is so popular — why we have art in doctors' offices and airports and on city streets; why many psychologists say art programs in prisons are a kind of therapy. Art makes you feel, dare I say... good? But for so many years art has been associated with the left wing, with antiauthoritarianism — as seen in everything from the Black Panthers' poster art to Barbara Kruger's anticonsumerist wordplay and even Fairey's Obama work. The most daring art tends to be linked to protest, and many in power would probably prefer those works to be inaccessible to a wider audience.

Art has been displaced in our culture, but the artists in this feature are developing new ways to examine our greater selfhood in an era of disruption. Their art is made with personal and societal implications in mind. Some of it comes from the heart of the justice system, a full turn from the origins of the WPA.

These artists don't create art for art's sake. Their works aren't sharks in formaldehyde — fascinating yet so ostentatious that their meaning is lost in spectacle. This is a look at those who are creating monuments to living, breathing connection in times of discord — and something for us to live with.

MIRANDA BARNES

BOTH IMAGES LORRAINE MOTEL MEMPHIS TENNESSEE MEDIUM FORMAT FILM ON NEWSPAPER 2018

A true understanding of activism came to me first with the killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and then in 2014 with those of Michael Brown and Eric Garner.

I feared for my younger brothers, my father, my friends and any black man in this country who could be subjected to violence and have his death played out in the media so widely and publicly. I feared for myself, as a young black woman, and the thought that I would eventually have black children.

Those years solidified my choice to attend John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City and eventually graduate with a B.A. in humanities and justice, in 2018. I also came to the realization that the art world lacked stories like mine, so I started to take my photography more seriously and document topics I believe in. I felt a responsibility as a black photographer to highlight the black narrative missing from the mainstream landscape. That conviction remains to this day.

The two photos on these pages are from my coverage for *The New York Times* of the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. I chose them because I believe that what King achieved in his short time here is the epitome of activism. He carried the burden and the stress of millions of black Americans, championing equality for all.

These images, I hope, serve as a reminder that at the same time King was a legend, he was also a father, husband, brother and friend. Despite his status and accomplishments, at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, he was still a black man gunned down in America.

Barnes is a Caribbean-Anglo American photographer whose work challenges racial stereotypes.

YRSA DALEYWARD

I Have a Friend

I have a friend who means well. She comes to see me often and brings candles, sweets and sage. At the end of the night on the town she'll say, "text when you're home safe, babe."
Strange then, that when it happened,
when it happened, and I told her she said,
'Why were you there alone? You know what he's like.'
I have a friend who 'means well.' She knows how to soothe things like depression (golden root, blueberries, orange scent) and will always want to celebrate your birthday—but when there's a man in the room she jokes about your faults.
I have a friend who means well, so well, but doesn't trust anyone around her boyfriend; will laugh out loud at his bad manners, will make excuses for his hate, will placate, will rearrange our plans together if he suddenly has a free night. I have a friend who knows herself and forgets herself in a blink. A friend that says things like Yeah, but I'm sure she provoked him.
I've got a well-meaning, dear soon to be not friend who says not all men, and, men will be men...
but my man would never.
I love my friend. My friend who says what did she do what did she drink look what she wore what does she think she is? I love my friend. I love my friend, but it's over.

Daley-Ward is a writer of mixed West Indian and West African heritage whose most celebrated works include a memoir, The Terrible, and a collection of poems, Bone.

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN

THE MAKING OF SUPER NIGGA, MIXED MEDIA ON VELLUM, 60 X 88 INCHES, 2015

Consider the history of the treatment of black and brown folks in America. Look at the ongoing treatment of unarmed black men at the deadly hands of a number of unhinged and rogue police officers. Then look at my work *The Making of Super Nigga*.

In 2015 I found myself compelled to make art in response to the wretched reality that is the bedrock of our great United States. Here, the white police officer (or "Super Nigga") mutates into the beastly men he has succeeded in demonizing and murdering in cold blood.

The police officer is mangled, wracked by his violent history going back to the Ku Klux Klan and ruled by his terror. He is bound at the hips by the imagined large and mighty penis of the black man who overpowers him and represents the center of his inferiority and insecurity. And of course, no depiction of an officer would be complete without his gun ready at hand, his only recourse for fighting against the fears — the fear of that black man — that lie within him.

The subject is dressed in a vintage-like Superman costume with the colors of the American flag. Superman, an American hero, is in fact an immigrant who pretends, as his disguise, to be clumsy and incompetent in order to fit in. The police officer thinks he needs his uniform to declare himself better than the lesser earthly mortals.

In today's political climate — both here in America and around the world — there is a growing upheaval about the socalled majority's replacement, the changing of the guard, the fear that jobs and professional opportunities are somehow being taken from superior white men and given to black and brown folks.

We shall never forget the age-old chant of those Nazis marching down the street in the land of the brave and free that fateful morning in Charlottesville, Virginia. "Jews will not replace us! Blacks will not replace us!" And yet, their severe lack of competence prevents them from realizing the indisputable fact that they are not being replaced; simply put, they are being outperformed.

As a result, and scarily so, they're all becoming Super Niggas.

Quinn grew up drawing comics in the public housing projects on Chicago's South Side. Today he's a Brooklyn-based mixedmedia artist who creates powerful composite portraits that explore social issues.

TIMOTHY CURTIS

BLUES PRISONERS, OIL ON CANVAS, 84 X 96 INCHES, 2019; DESTROY SOMERSET, 75 X 15 FEET, 2015

My career started on the streets of Philadelphia. I turned to graffiti at the age of nine, when my friend Fat Steve gave me my first tag, "Pipe." I stole some markers and a few years later taught myself calligraphy; I became fascinated with varying lines and how they communicated contrasting feelings and emotions.

Philadelphia graffiti culture has a style all its own, focused on long lines and embellishment and bound by friendship. No matter what neighborhood I bounced to or from, I was never alone. My friends were every race, color and religion, but we found common ground in being impoverished and fatherless. None of us knew much beyond our art and getting into trouble, but we always knew love.

Even in prison, camaraderie was my means of survival. In 2015, at the end of an eight-year sentence, I created a 75-foot painting in the gymnasium at Somerset state prison with fellow inmates. The goal was to paint something that pushed against the system's deep-rooted hatred for the poor and people of color. My collaborators were all serving life sentences, so the walls stand for them. We painted a brown fist holding a 100-pound kettlebell smashing "Somerset" to pieces. The explanation I gave the prison staff, however, referenced the CrossFit program. This was my "Good-bye, fuck you!" — a proclamation that no prison could kill our spirits or creativity.

My work, including the piece above, focuses on powerful lines that put my emotions into action. It's intended to provoke thought, connection and happiness. I aspire to create a new visual language available to all people. I don't claim to know what makes art great; I just keep drawing and painting, hoping to find out one day.

In my experience, activism is powerful when it's loud and when it's soft. Sometimes it's the quiet, cautious works — the ones that feel like a secret shared among a select few — that make communities feel closest.

Curtis, a self-taught artist born in Philadelphia and based in New York City, focuses on calligraphy and graffiti-inspired line work.

IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS. RAZOR WIRE AND FLOWERS ON CONCRETE. 2017

It all began with skateboarding, when we were just 21 and 15. We would spend our days in 2006 skateboarding around Tabriz and post simple self-made stencils and stickers all over the city. We didn't know anything about the international street-art movement at the time, but we soon became obsessed with learning all about it. But street art is heavily censored in Iran.

While the strict laws inspired our creativity, enforcement made it difficult to grow as artists. When we started to get attention and received international orders, we couldn't even ship the works, because mail was searched for contraband. We had to cover a given work with another, more traditional canvas. Still, we never lost our motivation.

After six years of working in Iran — and dealing with all the stress, fear and lack of support that comes with life as an artist there — we decided to leave. In 2012 we planned our first solo show in New York City, got our visas and finally made it to the United States. We haven't left since.

The freedom of America makes it so much easier to create, to experiment. But our knowledge of the lack of freedom in other parts of the world — issues of human rights, capitalism, censorship, ecological justice — continues to inspire, even as we've evolved beyond single-layer stencil work.

Still, despite the constant change in medium, we're sure to keep our work simple. With simplicity, we maintain a voice that can communicate across languages, regions and education levels.

We hope this piece falls in line with our goal to reach across any barriers that divide people all over the world. In *Imagine a World Without Borders*, the flowers cover the razor wire in protest. While barbed wire is meant to keep people out, flowers welcome people in.

Regardless of where they come from, all humans should be welcome. Immigrants, like us, leave what they know not because they want to but because they must. Sure, this work may play only a small role in your day, but maybe —even just for a moment — we can help you escape from the chaos and imagine a better world.

ICY and SOT are self-taught brothers from Tabriz, Iran who are inspired by their personal experiences with artistic and political censorship.

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